Franco's Chamber of Horrors BY CESAR FALCON

NEW MASSES

FIFTEEN CENTS

January 21, 1941

WASHINGTON TUG-OF-WAR

A report from the front by A. B. Magil

THEODORE DREISER

Our Democracy: Will It Endure?

THE LEASE-LEND DICTATORSHIP

An Editorial

PETAIN LOSES HIS PHILOSOPHER

The Meaning of Henri Bergson by Lewis Widener

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Between Ourselves

IT MAY be hard to believe but it is thirty years since a group of people got together to launch a new magazine. Yes, three decades have passed since that first issue of the old *Masses*. And to celebrate NM's thirtieth birthday, we are announcing herewith a special anniversary number to appear in mid-February. Bruce Minton, who is in charge of the issue, informs this department that it will be sixty-four pages long. To start with, 75,000 copies will be run off the presses. The theme of the anniversary number will be the American Dream, with outstanding writers and artists contributing. Part of the anniversary celebration is a meeting to be held on Sunday afternoon, February 16, at New York's Manhattan Center.

Ruth McKenney will soon be back in the magazine with Strictly Personal. Meanwhile she sends the following letter to many friends who sent her such kind messages of sympathy and courage: "I shall never be able to tell you how much it meant to me to have your strength to lean upon in this difficult time. I know my sister Eileen could never have a more beautiful memorial than the piles of letters in the NM office mourning her wit and courage, her revolutionary purpose and abiding faith in the future.

"One friend—a friend I have never met but know through his good letters to this magazine—wrote me: 'The deepened love for all people which comes to one with Communist thought and action, deepens also one's love for those near to him in blood, in friendship, and in marriage; and in this sense it may be that you will feel your loss more keenly. But you have this advantage: real desolation cannot touch you so long as your roots are among the people, that infinitely various and deathless family which will outlast the love of any one of us.'

"I believe this too, and I wish I could put down in words how much this letter, and all the other beautiful messages sent to me have served to restore my heart and strengthen my spirit in these past days. To J. H. and Virginia P. and 'A Reader' who, for lack of addresses, I cannot thank personally, my deep gratefulness."—Ruth McKenney.

If you live within commuting distance of New York's Webster Hall at 119 E. 11th Street, you have no doubt reserved the evening of Thursday, January 23, for the second edition of "Interpretation, Please!" Ticket applications are already flooding NM's mail. The topic is "Literature and Social Issues" and the experts include six well-known writers. On the panel is William Blake, author of *The World Is Mine, The Painter and the Lady, An American Looks at Karl Marx;* Alvah Bessie, NM's drama critic, and author of *Men in Battle, Dwell in the Wilderness,* and veteran of the Spanish war; Albert Maltz, playwright and novelist, author of *Underground Stream, The Way Things Are,* and *Stevedore;* Joshua Kunitz, authority on Soviet literature, author of *Dawn Over Samarkand* and co-author of *Voices of October;* and Isidor Schneider, poet, critic, and author of *Comrade Mister* and *From the Kingdom of Necessity.* The interlocutor will be Sender Garlin, *Daily Worker* columnist. Tickets (50 cents each) purchased in advance guarantee the holder a seat in the reserved section. They may be obtained at NM's office, 461 Fourth Avenue, at the Workers Book Shop, 50 E. 13th Street, and at Bookfair, 133 W. 44th Street, New York.

We are still hearing from readers about Dr. Virgil Jordan's speech before the Investment Bankers Association—a speech which unwittingly exposed the war aims of our lords of creation. Last week we received the following from R. R., in Chicago: "Have you considered reprinting the speech for mass distribution? I can think of no more important anti-war step. When the enemy falls at our feet like an overripe fruit—kerplunk—shall we pick our way daintily around the obstruction, saying nothing? Or shall we call out the skywriters, emblazon victory on the horizon, and shout it from every housetop?"

Last week's editorial leader, "The Britain We Want to Aid," has also evoked favorable comment. From G. K., Lackawanna, N. Y., comes this: "They are expanding steel production in this area and some of us have worn long faces as we thought of the metallic death which is being created in Lackawanna, near which I live. But when we read your excellent article on the hope which now rises in Britain for a People's Government, we felt happier. There is a Britain we want to aid with all our might."

Several NM editors and contributors will be teaching during the new term of the Writers School of the League of American Writers, 381 Fourth Avenue. Ruth McKenney, Richard Wright, and Isidor Schneider will speak on "How to Find Yourself in Writing." William Blake lectures on "How to Get a Book Published." Lectures on the popular novel will be given by Joshua Kunitz and Wellington Roe. Mr. Blake will also speak on the American historical novel, a field in which he specializes. Bruce Minton will talk on political article writing, Joy Davidman on poetry, and Wellington Roe, in addition to his other course, on the technique of preparing popular magazine articles.

Who's Who

CESAR FALCON was one of Spain's leading newspapermen during the Spanish War. . . . The article by Theodore Dreiser in this issue is excerpted from his new book, *America Is Worth Saving.* . . . Frank T. Baker has written on Latin-American affairs for numeous magazines. . . . Jessamyn West McPherson is a young writer living on the West Coast. . . . Lewis Widener teaches philosophy in an Eastern college. . . . Francis Franklin teaches history at the New York Workers School. . . . Isidor Schneider was formerly literary editor of NM, and is the author of *From the Kingdom of Necessity.* . . . Howard P. Ryan is a screen writer in Hollywood. . . . Michael Finn is a Chicago newspaperman. . . . Lou Cooper is a musician and composer.

Flashbacks

As *Oliver Wiswell* and other distortions of American history are encouraged by the Tories of today, it is a pleasure to note that the anniversary of Benjamin Franklin falls due this week. This great American who sided with the people against the British was born Jan. 17, 1706. . . . The struggle of the Spanish people for their democracy took a great stride forward Jan. 16, 1936, with the formation of the Spanish People's Front. . . . A young revolutionary in Moscow sprang into prominence at an illegal debate Jan. 21, 1894, against a reactionary sect (the Narodniks) which blocked the path of the Russian Revolution. The struggle against these opponents of Marxism was successful and the name of the young leader was Lenin. . . . On the same day, January 21, thirty years later (1924), Lenin died after having led the successful struggle of the Russian people against capitalism. . . . And lest we forget how they worked it in the last war: President Wilson who was soon to involve us, addressed the Senate on Jan. 22, 1917, saying, "It must be a peace without victory."

THIS WEEK

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NEW MASSES

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Washington Tug-of-War

A. B. Magil gives a first-hand report from the capital battle-front as one of the most crucial sessions of Congress opens. Interviews with Wheeler and Marcantonio.

Washington.

THE cab driver said: "Business is better than it was last year at this time because of this here rearmament. All the We Want Willkie boys are trying to get in on rearmament. They say: 'We wanna get ours before the balloon busts.'" He chuckled. And that is as good a report on the state of the Union as any I've heard. The gold rush has come to Washington. The We Want Willkie boys have indeed struck pay dirt: the Roosevelt foreign policy; by rail and by plane they are coming to stake out their claims.

I arrived in the capital while Congress was still getting its bearings, just before being sandbagged with the new dictatorial lend-lease bill. Washington has always been an unreal city, a great political wigwam, but never quite so incredible as now. I attended President Roosevelt's press conference the day the new bill was introduced. The President looked older, grayer than when I had seen him last in June, but there was the same self-confident, bland exterior. These press conferences, too, are part of the unreality of Washington. There is a spurious casualness, a give-and-take about them—spurious because everything is calculated, because the President and his stooges among the newspapermen are always subtly guiding the thread through the needle. One would not have thought, looking about the peaceful oval room, watching the President smile and call men by their first names that he had already sent to Congress a bill which would give him dictatorial powers in the name of saving democracy and under the pretense of aiding Britain, would enable American imperialism to compete with Nazi Germany for the role of militaristic dictator of the capitalist world. The Roosevelt manner, the *noblesse oblige* air imparts a specious glitter to the crassest infamy, seducing virginal liberals and sometimes even fooling unimaginative reactionaries. I wish I could relate what the President said off the record concerning a certain piece of foreign real estate that has been very much in the news; it would offer an insight into the high moral principles that animate his policies.

An Interview with Senator Wheeler.—I saw Senator Wheeler the day before the lend-lease bill (really a misnomer considering the measure's scope) was introduced. He is taller than I had expected from his pictures. He speaks volubly and with an apparent frankness that masks a shrewd opportunism that has ranged him at various times with both liberals and reactionaries in the Senate. Senator Wheeler was suffering from a heavy cold on the day I visited him, but it did not impair his vigor. He sat behind his desk and talked. Before he was through he had not only said the things one might have expected him to say about war and peace, but for the first time had endorsed the idea of American-Soviet collaboration to further peace.

"We're getting into the war," he said. "We criticize the Communists for trying to establish their ideas in other countries, we criticize the Nazis, but the President is proposing to do the same." This linking of Communists and Nazis is typical of Wheeler. Even when he is waging a good fight, he seems to feel it necessary to placate the reactionaries with a dash of Red-baiting. "I know the people are against getting into the war." He cited the response to his radio address delivered the day after the Roosevelt fireside chat. Whatever one may think of Wheeler, one cannot dismiss with epithets like "Munich-man" and "appeaser" those letters sent by ordinary people in all parts of the country. I saw those stacks of letters; I read some of them; I came away enormously impressed.

The Montana senator said he had received more than 50,000 letters and telegrams—"a greater amount of mail than for any two speeches I've made in the Senate. I got lots of mail during the Supreme Court reform fight and during the fight on conscription, but nothing like this." Ninety-three percent of the telegrams were favorable, while the letters were running twenty to one. He called in an assistant who corrected him on the latter figure. A sampling had shown that about 97 percent of the letters were favorable. The assistant said that the largest amount of mail had come from New York state. Pennsylvania came next, then Illinois, New Jersey, and California. A number of unions, most of them CIO, had responded; among them were the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union of Bisbee, Ariz., and United Auto Workers locals in Detroit and Flint. In reading through a number of the letters I was struck by the fact that not one discussed the specific proposals which Senator Wheeler had made in his speech as a working basis for peace negotiations. These proposals included restoration of Germany's 1914 boundaries, return of her pre-war colonies and the establishment of an independent France, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Norway and an autonomous (whatever that may mean) Poland and Czechoslovakia. But the ordinary folks who had written to Senator Wheeler were not interested in the particulars for rearranging the imperialist scheme of things; what they wanted was to keep America out of war. It was the senator's opposition to the Roosevelt involvement measures that they supported.

I read through some of these letters at random. One said: "I don't think people who want peace ore 'appeasers' or 'fellow-travelers' no matter what Mr. Roosevelt thinks. I think we are real Americans. I thank you for your talk." Another, signed by several names, said: "We, the undersigned, are not senile college professors, presidents, or publishers, but those American youths who will do the suffering and the fighting if our country is lured into the European holocaust. We believed our writers, our history teachers, and textbooks until they attempted to mislead us by their fascist doctrines (sugar-coated pills labeled 'panacea for the ills of democracy')."

Incidentally, I got the distinct impression that Senator Wheeler does not take those peace proposals of his too seriously. He told me, in fact, that they had been improvised only a few hours before the speech was delivered. He believes that a negotiated peace must come sometime, so why not now? He is convinced, moreover, that Britain cannot successfully invade the continent even with the help of American troops, that she cannot win the war without the military participation of both the United States and the USSR. Like his peace plan, Senator Wheeler's whole approach to the problem of peace is shot through with contradictions. He opposes the President's steps to war, yet favors aid to Britain. He urges a peace negotiated by the imperialist powers, but emphasized to me that such a peace must enable the masses of the people to live. Whether these attempts to reconcile irreconcilables stem from confusion or opportunism, they are typical of isolationist thinking which is unable to break through the vicious circle of depending for peace on the forces that make for war. This is also reflected in Senator Wheeler's readiness to play ball with reactionary appeasers as well as with the progressive American Peace Mobilization. "When you're in a fight," he said, "you can't be too particular about whom you get into bed with."

The senator turned to a discussion of the background of the present war. "I think England and the United States were stupid not to have collaborated with Russia a long time ago. Then you wouldn't have had the situation you have now; Hitler wouldn't have made war. But the reactionaries in England wouldn't have anything to do with Russia.

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They helped arm Hitler because they thought he would go east.

"I was for recognition of Russia years ago," he continued. "I visited the country in 1923 and on my return wrote articles favoring recognition. While I have been disappointed in many things the Russian government did both internally and in foreign policy—I think, for example, that the fight in Finland was a mistake from the standpoint of world opinion—I have always taken the position that the United States cannot tell other countries what their internal policies shall be, nor can we dictate what their foreign policy shall be so long as it doesn't interfere with us."

I asked Senator Wheeler what he thought of the proposal that the United States make some agreement with the USSR for collaboration in the Far East in the interest of peace. "I think such collaboration would be to the advantage of the United States," he said.

The senator had a luncheon engagement and had to cut short the interview. As he arose to leave I mentioned the threat to civil liberties and asked what he expected to do on that score. "I will fight any attacks on civil liberties," he said firmly.

The CIO executive board meets.—The day after I came to Washington the CIO executive board began its two-day session, the first such meeting since the Atlantic City convention in November. John L. Lewis was unable to attend because of illness. There is a loud and thoroughly slanderous whispering campaign being directed at Lewis. It emanates from administration agents and from Hillmanites—the distinction is largely formal. It seeks to tie Lewis with appeasers and with anti-Semitism. Those responsible for this scurrilous campaign are hoping to break Lewis in the negotiations for a new coal agreement that open in February. They know that even in silence and illness the former CIO head is still the towering force that rallies all the most vigorous elements in the CIO against the stratagems of those who want to bind labor to the dictates of war economy.

The CIO executive board adopted good resolutions, a splendid legislative program. It declared its determination to defend labor's right to strike, to protect and enlarge its gains. There was no mistaking those words for any of the utterances of the AFL executive council. But the executive board also endorsed the Reuther plan to build 500 planes a day and the Murray plan to speed production by establishing joint management-labor councils in each basic industry. And the board said nothing about keeping America out of war, a backward step from the decisions of the Atlantic City convention.

I attended one of CIO President Philip Murray's press conferences, and in his words there appeared the same dualism: "I don't think labor should be asked to lay aside the right to strike for redress of wrongs;" and "My first concern is with seeing that a good efficient administration of national defense is created." I got the impression that Murray is very much preoccupied with these various plans to increase war production. He may not realize it, but he is actually trying to move in two different directions at the same time: to defend and strengthen labor, and to support a so-called defense program whose effect is to strengthen monopoly, hogtie labor and undermine its positions. Both can't be done. Eventually the CIO will have to choose.

The Reuther plan.—The plan which bears the name of a "Socialist," Walter Reuther of the United Auto Workers' executive board, is a ghoulish thing. It proposes to gear labor's creative powers, its capacity to build useful things and a useful world, to the production of superlative instruments of destruction—500 war planes a day. This is to be done through utilizing the facilities of the auto industry. Death is to ride the assembly line, and live human beings are asked to applaud.

Both the aircraft companies and the auto manufacturers regard the Reuther plan with a chilly eye. The plane companies don't want any competition, while the auto magnates are suspicious of anything which proposes to do things differently from the way they have found most profitable. The Defense Commission is for similar reasons also opposed to the Reuther plan, though one well-informed person assured me that Knudsen personally is sympathetic to it. This seems hardly credible in view of Knudsen's connections, only formally severed, with General Motors. President Roosevelt, in an effort to conciliate the CIO, has given the Reuther plan a pat on the back without making any commitment. And Reuther himself, who is one of Sidney Hillman's pets, has become something of a fair-haired boy. Rumor has it that he is soon to be given a government post, that he has, in fact, already been assigned an office in the War Department building.

I talked with a newspaperman who is among those who have been instrumental in publicizing the Reuther plan. He doesn't know much about its technical aspects, but he thought that its sponsors probably underestimate the difficulties and its opponents overestimate them. The 500-planes-a-day figure seems to be a piece of sensational sloganizing, but there is no doubt that the only partly used facilities of the auto industry, plus whatever plant equipment would be made available by curtailing the production of automobiles, could be employed to increase substantially the output of planes. Incidentally, this newspaperman, who is himself an enthusiastic supporter of the Roosevelt foreign policy, admitted that, apart from technical questions, one's attitude toward the plan depended on one's attitude toward the war; if the war is reactionary, so is the plan.

People's Congressman.—"The only ones who are for war are the boys and girls with axes to grind in Washington and in the press. Every member of Congress knows that the people back home are against war and the lend-lease bill which they identify with war."

Rep. Vito Marcantonio of New York sat in Childs on Pennsylvania Avenue, eating a late dinner and talking between gulps of food. There is no defeatism in this little Italian-American. He stood alone in the entire last Congress in voting against every one of the Roosevelt war appropriation bills, but he did not stand alone in the country. Re-elected to Congress by a greatly increased plurality after capturing both the American Labor and Republican primaries and narrowly missing the Democratic designation, he is in a fighting mood. Every week-end he flies back to New York; drop in at almost any hour of a Sunday at his headquarters in Harlem, the Fiorello LaGuardia Club (ironic name), and you can see him receiving his constituents, poor Italians, Puerto Ricans, and Negroes, who come to him for advice and help. But it is not only Marcantonio's own constituents that look to him. He told me that he has received letters from all over the country congratulating him on his return to Congress and urging him to continue his fight to keep America out of war. The New York representative has reintroduced his bills to repeal the conscription law and the alien registration act and is again sponsoring the American Youth Act.

Mention President Roosevelt and Marcantonio grows caustic. "When he spoke of establishing freedom everywhere, did he have Puerto Rico in mind? Roosevelt wants to protect the western hemisphere the way Al Capone wanted to protect Chicago businessmen. And on civil liberties he seems to be establishing unity with Henry Ford. Ford uses thugs and Roosevelt 'the sovereignty of government.' It's Franklin's streamlined chassis as against Henry's Model T methods." Marcantonio was equally scornful of the President's liberal apologists. "A good definition of a New Dealer these days is a person who thinks FDR is a great guy because he doesn't punish peace advocates as severely as the Romans punished the Christians."

This anti-fascist congressman is under no illusions about the professed aims of the thrust to war. "If the administration is in earnest about fighting Hitlerism, why doesn't it start by cleaning out the fascists in the State Department, headed by Sumner Welles, America's counterpart of old Joe Umbrella Halifax?"

We had finished our meal and Marcantonio was going back to his apartment to relax. He works seven days a week and hasn't had a vacation in four years; there's so much to do, especially when you're the only member of either house who can be counted on in every situation. "People ask what can be done? I say: climb stairs, knock on doors. Get the people to act. Write to your congressmen. Give full support to the American Peace Mobilization." (Marcantonio is one of its vice-chairmen.) He paused. "The time to fight is now—not after you're knocked out."

That word "now"—will America's millions understand it? For the bell has rung for what may be the final round in the battle between the people and the warmakers.

A. B. MAGIL.

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Franco's Chamber of Horrors

A regime of hunger and torture. The Falangists execute thousands of republican Spain's best defenders. But the spirit of those who live is indomitable.

Cesar Falcon, author of this article, was one of the most prominent journalists of republican Spain. He is now living as a political refugee in Latin America where he maintains close contact with developments in his home country.—The Editors.

A MAN has just come here from Spain. He is free from Franco's clutches, sure of freedom; once again he feels confident. Why, as he sits in the sun by my house, in the soft afternoon air, does his gaze wander, why does he suddenly seem to be seized by some nameless terror?

Because he was in Porlier prison for eight months.

He can speak of nothing else, he remembers nothing else. Those eight months in the Madrid prison fill his thoughts, as they will to the end of his life. Through a strange series of coincidences he was an exceptionally lucky prisoner. He was not hung by his genital organs, the soles of his feet were not burned, nor his gums pried open, nor were hot irons thrust between his finger nails. But he has seen all this. He has lived with agony and heroism, with the desperate cries of tortured men, the infinite hunger of the people, the silent weeping of women. This vision of martyrdom, burned into his soul, never leaves him.

"Today is the day for taking them out," he says.

Why does he say it in the present? Because he knows that while this fearful methodical massacre goes on, there are many days when they are "taken out." Every day, as the afternoon wanes, the 1,500 or 1,800 men are made to form in line, at the same hour, in the prison yard. For those who are selected, tonight will be their last. How many will there be?—eighty, one hundred, one hundred and fifty. The officer walks to and fro, followed by his assistants. He holds the lists in his hands. He insists upon a correct formation, upon the exact distance between each row of prisoners, and upon silence in the ranks. Slowly he comes and goes, reproaching the condemned men, to whom this scene is now familiar, and who remain breathlessly waiting, trying to see the names on the list.

Several minutes go by. Standing in the center of these men the officer looks about to see that everything is as it should be. Then he unfolds the list. He says: "Which of you *canaille* has spoken in the ranks? Silence! Bandits!"

THE LISTS

There is a deep, sad silence weighing upon the motionless figures in the dusk. The officer still waits.

After a pause he reads the lists to himself, stopping at each name. The condemned men wait, wait. . . . Finally his solemn voice says: "Jose. . . ." Every man called Jose shudders. The officer stops to light a cigarette. He puffs twice, relishing it, then looks with a smile at all the Joses, taut with anguish. "Jose Ro—" . . . Among so many man, how many may not be called Romero, Rosas, Rodriguez, any of a thousand Spanish surnames beginning "Ro." Any of these, if his name is Jose, may be selected tonight. The officer prolongs the uncertainty. It is the customary, calculated refinement of cruelty, with which the victims begin their last agony. Franco employs all imaginable tortures; even the announcement of who is to die is one more means of tormenting the prisoners in an effort to break their spirit.

More minutes pass while the officer stops coughing and pronounces the surname: "Rodriguez" . . . . But Rodriguez and what else? Among several hundred men there must be more than one Jose Rodriguez; perhaps there are a great many. He knows this, so he waits until all of them have gone through these terrible moments of doubt and agony. This is the method of the Falange. This is what it has learned from the German and Italian experts. It is the art of breaking the iron spirit that has withstood blows and torture.

The light is waning; the names are indecipherable. Another five or ten minutes of silence, of calming oneself, of trying not to give in to the shaking of one's knees. The fifteen, twenty, or fifty Jose Rodriguez' stiffen and wait for a candle to be brought, and for the officer to say slowly: "Jose Rodriguez Lopez."

Then Jose Rodriguez takes his place at the head of another line. He knows that at dawn he will die. Those other Jose Rodriguez' whose second surname is not Lopez, relax. But now come the Juans, Franciscos, Antonios. Slowly, this scene repeats itself until the end of the list.

FALANGIST TRUCKS

The Falangist trucks come at about four in the morning. This is the most nerve-wracking moment at Porlier. Five thousand men crouching on their cots, each wrapped in his own thoughts, humming songs of the recent war, until the moment comes when the full-throated song arises from the brave men who leave the chapel to be herded to the grave.

The condemned men lose all idea of time. Since they went into the chapel, they have felt stronger, more indifferent to the jailer's ferocity. Now nothing can hold back their words, no one can subject them to blows for a mere gesture, or sink a hot iron into their ribs for having spoken the word "Salud." There is nothing in the chapel but a wooden bench, but this serves for the men with the hardiest spirit. Erect upon the bench, exalted with deep emotion, once more they tell the

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others what they are dying for. They tell them again why the republic fell, and why it will soon triumph. One says: "Unity, comrades, this is our strength! We will all die united; we will all fall into the same ditch; and beyond the prison, in all Spain, they will be united, closely united to continue the struggle. We can die serenely, certain of triumph!"

But they are not yet at peace. They still remember all the problems of the war, those burning questions which agitated the meetings, which filled the nights spent in the trenches, and were food and drink throughout those months of struggle. They will die, yes—perhaps that is important, and painful. But during ten or fifteen months of silence the jailer's blows have been hard to bear, and now they can talk, discuss among themselves, sing their songs once more.

ECHOES

The jailers wish the prison walls were thicker, they would like to seal up every cranny and stop the waves of sound, so that the echoes of these great meetings might not reach beyond the chapel. But they cannot prevent them from rising to the galleries above and through the corridors and into the cells. All the jailers can do is to go from door to door, with hate in their hearts and with a hot iron in readiness for any prisoner who moves. The slightest movement means death from blows—in the cellar. But all the men, feigning sleep, are listening hard.

In the chapel the speakers continue. "Unity, comrades, against the oppressors of Spain, against those who would divide the people, against the cowards who delivered us to the enemy!"

Recalling the cowardice and betrayals of 1939, how much graver are those of today! The blood of Spain is flowing in torrents. And yet there are those who, even far from Spain, still try to play the old game of their personal ambitions and hates. But not the men of Porlier; here the blood of the tormented heroes of Spain is all one.

One of the condemned men, seeking to cheat the executioner, has cut an artery. His blood flows on the cement floor and the others surround him, try to conceal his suffering from the jailers, while his blood drenches them and draws them even closer together. The moment arrives. The dying man still breathes and is the assassins' prey. They can torment him as he lies on the stretcher with no fear of his striking, or speaking back. This is their only pastime. For there is work to be done as usual, and with fear and trembling, for they must fire quickly, terrified, facing men who, just because they are confronting them, maintain their marvelous spirit.

The loud horns of the trucks and motorcycles try to drown the singing, the *"Vivas"* and "Down with Franco" and "Spain!"—the echoing cry of "Spain!" which breaks upon the horrible silence of the prison as the condemned men go out. But the angry noise of the trucks is not enough to stifle the shouts that mount above Torrijos. Only one sound is heard above the shouts, a voice piercing through the dawn: "Adios, my beloved. . . . I remain here with your children, against them . . . your Maria."

These women who are torn by their last farewell cry stand here, night after night, in the shadows of the walls, waiting. . . . Before the war, many of these same women used to say to their husbands: "Don't get involved in politics. . . . What good will it do you?" Others were more indifferent. "It's his affair," they would say, gossiping with the neighbors. During the war they worked just as they had always worked. Did they understand the meaning of the struggle? Some did, and even became leaders of organizations; others continued the daily search for a handful of beans, a few crumbs of bread, a bit of wood, untiringly, uncomplainingly, throughout the thirty-two months of war, with that unselfishness and silence that was one of the most heroic aspects of the defense of Madrid.

At the gates of Porlier these women have come together again. Hour after hour, waiting, hoping against hope for permission to visit their men, sending them a frayed blanket which they never receive. There are the less understanding women who have never done anything but be silent, bear children, and who have no realization of their eternal glory. Those who understood more, who spoke in the breadlines, who worked day and night with all their strength, and even those who only understood, are themselves in other prisons, weighed down by hunger, blows, dying together at dawn.

How much longer must these vague shadows wait, so patiently, so quietly, weeping in the shadow of a tree at Torrijos? How can they learn the fate of their men? How can she see him, if only from a distance, or feel his last footsteps, hear his last cries? The Falangist jailers tell them nothing.

"Whom are you waiting for?"

"For Julian Martinez Perez."

"That *canaille!* He's already croaked. Get out!"

Can this be true? The uncertainty stabs her heart. Why should they kill Julian Martinez Perez? When, at what moment, did they condemn him? On what night did they take him to his death, while she stood here waiting until the first rays of dawn, and even then continued her hopeless vigil?

Gropper

To know their fate, to perhaps see their men, if only for this, the women seize upon the idea of organizing themselves. Few words are spoken, but they take turns, and keep a permanent watch. Night and day some of them are always there, waiting to pick up a tiny ball of paper which a prisoner has thrown across the street: "Jacinta Lopez, Puente de Vallecas."

The watcher runs through the streets many miles to the distant Puente de Vallecas. She arrives breathlessly, only able to whisper: "He is being tried."

She runs to others. The guards do not allow women to come to the trials. But at least they can see their men, and crowd together and push the sentinel, so that when their men pass, prodded by the Falangist bayonets, they can exchange one look, which seems to say everything, and end everything, and which is the only consolation the prisoner has in the terrifying Spain of Franco.

Twenty years! . . . .

The ranks of these watching women are growing very rapidly. Bowed down by sorrow, more women join these watchers, among them many who no longer have anything to hope for, who know that the torn bodies of their fathers, husbands, sons, are lying in an unknown ditch in the Eastern Cemetery. They continue to watch, day and night, in the scorching heat of August and the icy winds of December, waiting to know something of the prisoner's fate.

HUNGER IN MADRID

"The hunger in Madrid is frightful," adds the man who is telling me this story. "There are neither potatoes nor bread. The monthly ration barely suffices for a family for one day. One has to make some sort of arrangement with the clandestine speculators. For instance, one liter of olive oil is the allowance, but the speculators sell any amount of it for twenty-five pesetas a liter. The authorities themselves make the rations stricter, not only because there is little food, but also to help the clandestine traffic, in which they take part. But meat cannot be had at any price. Potatoes cost as much as three pesetas a kilo. Who, unless he is a high Falangist official, has enough money for a real meal? The women who watch the Porlier are without work, no employer will give them work. They have no means of earning a peseta, nor anyone who can earn it for them. But they go through the workers' districts, they go to the neighboring villages, even to the Province of Toledo, on foot, from house to house, collecting a bit of food for the prisoners. Many families go without supper so that they may give them a few crumbs. These women, who are starving themselves, take every bit to the men.

The men die by hundreds, shot against the cemetery walls, and in the cellars of the prisons, their bodies are broken by blows. They also die of hunger, betrayed into a regime of torture and extermination; they die for lack of work and bread in the huts on the outskirts

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of the cities. And the women and children die —that great race of orphans who had republican fathers, whom the Falange watches so that no one shall extend a hand to them, nor give them work, nor any help. But the terrible tragedy of the death of the people does not end the horrors. There is still something more cruel: tribunals, and cold, calculated mass assassination. The trials are conducted behind closed doors, with only a few Falangists present. The prisoners sit crowded together, kicked into place by the Civil Guards. The prosecutor goes to work quickly:

"According to the papers before me, this group of cowards has committed the most abominable crimes during the democratic period. I ask the following punishment: death for the twenty-five in the first row; twenty years for the next eight rows; fifteen years for the next four, and twelve years and one day for the rest. . . . *Arriba Espana!* . . . . Franco! Franco! Franco!"

"Stand up, you first twenty bandits!" orders the president. "Give your names."

The secretary writes them down—sometimes, if there are not too many, he inquires about their trade. Sometimes one of them attempts an explanation only to be interrupted. "Silence, *canaille!*" screams the president, and the butt of a rifle enforces silence. When the list is finished, the president says: "Condemned to death." Other punishments are decreed in the same manner.

The men who fought for their country's liberty know how to die, and have never flinched in the face of death. But Franco's assassins want also to humiliate and brutalize them. They kill these men for no reason, usually without even the pretense of a trial, without even knowing who is being killed.

Can you imagine the horror of the courts, where the prisoner's fate depends upon where, by chance, he may have sat down? Is there in all the world today, so filled with crime, anything more loathsome than these Franco judges, who condemn wholesale, without knowing whom they are condemning, just to achieve a certain number of deaths? And what of the great suffering of those thousands of men and women who have endured the agony of prison for thirty months and who go to their death with indomitable spirit? Yet no effective protest has been made anywhere. On the contrary, there are men in high places in certain countries who are offering Franco credits that he may strengthen his hangman's regime. The Spanish people need bread, but Franco and his German and Italian masters are not concerned about them.

And the Spanish republicans who languish in France must be saved. They live under the most abominable conditions, in daily peril that they may be turned over to Franco to suffer the same fate as their comrades in Spain. Mankind has need of those heroes. They have been offered haven in Mexico and other countries of Latin America. I am confident that the people of the United States will do their part to bring them to safety. They belong to the Spain that shall rise again.

CESAR FALCON.

The Ship They Can't Sink

THE men and women of loyalist Spain, incarcerated in the prison house of Petain's France, shiver in their flimsy cabins and barracks this winter, hungry, ill-clad, assailed by a multitude of ills. But the wind sweeping down from the Pyrenees, cruel as it is, is not their chief enemy. Falangist operatives, collaborating with Gestapo agents, go through the camps, death-lists in hand, choosing their prey.

Last week the 150,000 in these prison camps were assaulted by more enemies: men whose names they had never heard, far off in the America from which they hoped so much. These were the men who sought to undermine the labors of those progressives who work to bring the loyalist refugees to safe harbor in America. A campaign was afoot last week that should shame every decent-minded man in this country.

What happened? Last November a large group of friends of the refugees—some 150 cultural, professional, and labor leaders in this country—sponsored the American Rescue Ship Mission. Miss Helen Keller, the eminent writer and humanitarian, was honorary chairman. She and her associates set to work to raise $300,000 with which to buy a ship that could bring the Spanish loyalists to Mexico. They had obtained permission from former President Lazaro Cardenas to settle the refugees in his country. President Avila Camacho later honored his predecessor's pledge. Full co-operation and protection were promised by the Mexican Government. It entered into specific official agreements with Vichy.

Tens of thousands of Americans responded to the call of the rescue ship's sponsors. Chapters busied themselves in scores of localities raising the necessary funds. Negotiations for an adequate ship were undertaken; vessels were examined by a committee of experts. Everything was in full swing.

On December 6 Frederick Woltman, of the New York *World-Telegram,* began a series of articles with the purpose of discrediting the work of the committee. The *World-Telegram* proved an apt pupil of Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco. Just as the latter raised a "Red scare" to befuddle the issues at stake in Spain, so Roy Howard's paper dragged the notorious scarlet herring across the scene. The motives of the committee were impugned; Miss Keller was harassed by the press which talked about everything under the sun except 150,000 men, women, and children starving and freezing on the slopes of the French Pyrenees. (Of course, the inquisitors had not a word in their columns of type of the hundreds of thousands of men and women inside Franco's dungeons, some 20,000 of whom have been executed after tortures like those described by Cesar Falcon in the accompanying article.) This high-powered pressuring of commercial journalism had the effect of weakening a small minority of the ship's sponsors, some twenty in all.

Heartening, however, was the reply of the overwhelming number of sponsors. Abraham Flexner, of the Institute for Advanced Science at Princeton, put it this way: "Please retain my name on the list of sponsors for the American Rescue Ship Mission. I am disgusted that anyone should be taken in by the loose talk regarding Communism. It is high time that that sort of thing should become ridiculous." Harlow Shapley, director of the Harvard Observatory, wired: "Of course I agree with Flexner completely, and I am not renouncing my allegiance to a cause of human rescue just because Communists or Methodists or journalists or other ardent believers in their own political or religious convictions are also interested and active in the same humanitarian venture." Kirtley F. Mather, professor of geology at Harvard, telegraphed: "Attempt to rescue Spanish refugees is not a political matter but an expression of humanitarianism and loyalty to democratic principles. I have nothing but contempt for those who scuttle the Rescue Ship by a smear campaign based upon political prejudices and witch hunt techniques." Many similar statements were made by the endorsers who came to the defense of the mission from all parts of America.

The evil-minded men who sought to destroy the great undertaking were frustrated. The ship mission is still afloat, strengthened by the response of its endorsers. But the lessons of this offensive are manifold. They afford a glimpse at the techniques to be used by all reactionaries against anything good, anything progressive in American life. The moral should not be lost by any individual who seeks the general good of his land, and of all humanity. To succor the weary fighter for mankind has always been the tradition of the United States. Those who rant against the movement to aid the anti-fascist warriors of loyalist Spain are the ones who seek to destroy the finest in our American tradition. Surely Roy Howard has proven himself in the past no paragon of justice. In this latest action his newspaper—and all those who inspired the treacherous attack upon the Rescue Ship Mission—earned the scorn of all decent and honorable people.

THE EDITORS.

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Our Democracy: Will It Endure?

Theodore Dreiser answers the question. "American democracy is not quite such a frail flower as Wall Street imagines." They can't fool the people all the time.

LET us speak frankly. Every word of this talk about "the way of life of the Americas" and about "protection" and "hemisphere cooperation" is pure and unadulterated hypocrisy. What is happening, quite simply, is a gigantic world struggle between monopoly groups for the exclusive right to use South and Central America as a source of more profit. The only difference between the German and Italian monopolists on the one hand, and the English and American on the other, is that the former frankly call it conquest and the latter call it "protection." England's "protection" is exactly the same as England's domination. After the last war it was called a "League Mandate" but it was still the same kind of domination. If you think our "protection" is any different, you are living in a dream. It's the grab that counts, not the name.

If you think the people of Central America really want to be "protected" by us, you ought to see a doctor. And if you think there is one particle of democracy in all of this for anyone at all, you need the prompt attention of an alienist. There is nothing in it but swag for the Wall Street boys. . . .

Nor will we make our democracy endure by screaming like hysterical schoolgirls about the terrible Nazis and the terrible Fifth Columnists and the terrible Communists, without ever taking the trouble to find out just what Hitler could really do against us and what sort of defense we need—or to find out who the real Fifth Columnists are—or to find out what the Communists are. These are not at all difficult things to discover—indeed the real cognoscenti of Wall Street know the answers now, whatever they may pretend.

SHRILL CRIES

As to what Hitler could do to us: all we get from our President is shrill cries for an army of 2,000,000 and dark hints that "from the fjords of Greenland it is only six hours by air to New England," while "the Azores are only 2,000 miles from parts of our eastern seaboard." Now mark that word—"only"! Not a word about the fact that Hitler hardly began to bomb England until he had got within twenty miles of its coast. No mention of Winston Churchill's speech last June, when he said: "In the Skaggerak, because of the distance [four hundred-odd miles from England] we could give no air support to our surface ships and consequently, lying as we did close to the enemy's main air power in Norwegian waters, we were compelled to use only our submarines." And only the day before President Roosevelt uttered his ridiculous forebodings, the Senate Naval Committee had reported that "airplanes on the continents of Europe and Asia do not menace us." And they had added: "We cannot be attacked directly by the armed forces of any powerful foreign nation. We cannot be blockaded by any surface vessels or submarines. We cannot be starved. We cannot be invaded. Nor can our cities or homes be bombed from the air by foreign airplanes, if we make sure that we command the sea and air approaches."

Well, what is this? A monstrous practical joke? Are our President and the committee of experts down the road at the Senate no longer on speaking terms? Of course we need to see that we "command the sea and air approaches" against any possible enemy. But why all the hysteria—and why, in the most breath-taking defiance yet of all legality and neutrality and democracy, make England a present of fifty of our destroyers when we are told our own defenses are so sadly deficient?

The reason is only too obvious. We have no clearly announced defense policy because our real policy is imperialist aggression on Wall Street's behalf, not defense on the people's behalf. We are being rushed into war hysteria and prepared for war itself because our economic problems have become insoluble under this system and the only course left to our Fuehrers is to establish dictatorship, which can only be done under the guise of "national defense."

No democracy there. Not a shadow of it. . . .

I am an oldish man and I have seen and heard some hypocrisy in my time—but if there has ever been anything to beat the New Deal's contradictions I would be interested to hear about it. "Freedom of information and the press, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom from fear of attack, freedom from want"—those are the "ideals of government and peace" according to the New Deal policy. Yet President Roosevelt becomes positively angry when anyone seeks information on how his private love-affair with England is progressing, and leads all the other Wall Street voices in whooping up hysterical fear of a geographically impossible attack—and strikes millions off relief rolls because they happen to be of foreign birth. According to Senator Clark of Missouri, the man's hysteria is such that the war plank he tried to insert in the Democratic platform would have committed us to aid the Allies *until all democracies everywhere were restored to their former estate.* Senator Clark sarcastically added: "If the higher ethics require that no government established by force is to be recognized, I trust that no one will embarrass us by asking by what authority our flag flies in the Philippines."

And how well does it bode for America—the America you and I thought we inherited—that our land, once a haven for the "tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to be free"—has now become the asylum of all the foulest scum of Europe's decayed aristocracy? How do you like to see the refugee ships from Europe bringing tattered Grand Dukes and Princes, runaway bankers, old cast-off Bourbons, and the children of English aristocrats—even, on one ship which turned away human beings for lack of space, the two dogs of one Lady Mendl—while our government not only refuses entry to hundreds of thousands of homeless people who have really tried to fight fascism and Nazism, but actually brings pressure on Bolivia and Chile to cancel visas they proffered to anti-Nazi writers?

FASCISM AT HOME

That is but one of many signs of our present rulers' real sympathies with fascist dictatorship. Signs of American fascism appear everywhere, either unchecked or encouraged or promoted by our government. New vigilante groups springing up in Connecticut and elsewhere to take "private action" against "those endeavoring subversive activities." Pennsylvania state employees ordered not to wear buttons with the words "The Yanks Are *Not* Coming," on pain of dismissal. Aliens thrown out of work by the thousand and denied relief as an immediate result of the monstrous fingerprinting law—as if a man's place of birth, instead of his bankroll, were the measure of his probable loyalty to democracy. Millions still denied their constitutional right to vote in the South of "Democrat" Dies. Plans under way for industrialists to be allowed to maintain private storm troopers against possible "unrest" in the factories. The hunt for "Fifth Columnists" openly led by the Ku Klux Klan—itself America's Fifth Column Number 1—in Florida. The KKK boasting in its official publication that "It must be a source of great satisfaction to Klans-people everywhere that the President of the United States has come out boldly in defense of the Klan program." "Wartime" ordinances passed in McKeesport obliterating all civil rights, on the insistence of an American Legionnaire that they must pass "regardless of the Constitution." Students threatened with expulsion in Berkeley, Calif., for daring to oppose the Burke-Wadsworth conscription bill. Labor leaders sentenced to long jail terms under an Anti-Trust law which was introduced to control the monopoly corporations—and under which no corporation man has ever been imprisoned. Legislation before Congress for sedition laws which would end free speech, press, and assembly for citizens and non-citizens alike; for destruction of what remains of the Wagner act; for a domestic passport system similar to that of czarist Russia; for denial of constitutional rights to

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all minority parties; for silencing trade unions, churches, and fraternal organizations on all political issues. Plans completed for complete dictatorship on "M-Day," when wages would be fixed, the right to leave a job would be withdrawn, strikes and picketing would be forbidden, habeas corpus would disappear. . . . Exactly and precisely that Hitlerism which we are asked to get so excited about! What a picture of "democracy in action"! Who would not lay down his life for so glorious an ideal? The same fatal idea that destroyed France—the idea of abolishing that which the people are asked to defend in order to defend it.

If Americans knew how far we have already gone toward abolishing our democracy, they would rise in anger now in defense of their most precious possession. But millions don't know, because the only sources of information they have deliberately keep them from knowing. . . .

So we have gone a long way from democracy already. We go further every day that passes. . . .

Yet—maybe I am the victim of delusions, but I still believe our democracy has a good chance to endure.

I believe it because all these demonstrations and protests, despite the sabotaging of the press, have occurred and are occurring. The people are still alive to the issues, however much Wall Street tries to hide the immediate truth from them.

Lincoln said you couldn't fool all the people all the time. I think he was right. We are not only a fundamentally democratic people; we have a tradition of fighting for our democracy. And we *are* fighting. If the avenues left open to us by our governmental and financial Fuehrers are small, we simply have to broaden them by mass pressure or find new avenues.

American democracy is not quite such a frail flower as Wall Street imagines. It may not be the most beautiful that the world can ever develop—though in good weather Americans are inclined to think so—but most certainly it has proved to be a slow-growing, tough-fibered thing that has withstood Civil War, widespread plunder and graft, unprecedented centralization of wealth, slow starvation, and undernourishment and other assorted evils.

For as you know, it did not burst into full flower at the Constitutional Convention of 1787, nor did it thereafter receive careful cultivation. It was a seed sown by our forefathers, and the gardeners grossly underestimated the hardiness of the seed and the productivity of the soil. For long periods subsequently it has been neglected, even forgotten. But in time of its greatest peril the people always seem ready to rise in its defense—and they find their own ways of defending it.

Where do we find this spirit today? Not in the majority of labor leaders, who have been just as corrupted by the system, and have become just as strong a vested interest against progress as have their counterparts in England. But it is not difficult to recognize the labor leader who does have this genuine love of democracy in him. The more savagely he is smeared and assaulted by the billionaire press and the other tools of monopoly capital, the more certain we can be of his genuineness.

I know Harry Bridges, who is now being depicted for Americans as Satan in person complete with horns and tail. I would not have to know him to know that he is honest and genuine, but to meet and talk to him is to be convinced beyond doubt. His "crime" is very simple. He has successfully organized the waterfront workers of San Francisco, whom the employers had done everything in their power—with permanent success, they thought—to prevent from being organized. He has put vitality into the whole labor movement of San Francisco and of the West. In figures, here is his crime: hourly wages in San Francisco average $1.19 for newspaper employees, 83 cents for stone, clay, and glass workers, $1.00 for book and job printers, 85 cents for furniture workers, 79 cents for food and tobacco workers, 81 cents for metal workers, and 55 cents for canning and preserving workers. The equivalents in Los Angeles, still a citadel of the "open shop," are 97 cents, 64 cents, 82 cents, 67 cents, 67 cents, 72 cents, and 48 cents.

Terribly un-American, isn't it? Just chockful of alien isms? Shockingly bolshevistic and subversive? How can America survive this attempt to put purchasing power into the pockets of the mass? How, tell me how, can industry survive when people actually have money to buy its products?

Believe me, for I speak of what I know: Harry Bridges is a better American than most Americans ever dreamed of being—and that goes too for John L. Lewis, his chief, whom Bridges calls "the greatest force in the world today between complete reaction and the maintenance of civil liberties." . . .

It is with the leadership of men of that stamp that American democracy can only be saved, by the mass of working Americans. Not by just passing laws and sitting around, expecting them to be enforced. Only by a continual pressure from the bottom, where the need for more democracy and more consuming power is. For as Bridges says:

> The Wagner act was a great gain for the workers. But, as it is now, it protects us only as long as the unions are on the job to have it enforced—not by leaving it up to the government. Likewise the Security Exchange Commission, and the maritime laws: they aren't beneficial just by being there—but they can be made beneficial. We complimented Roosevelt on his intentions when he was doing something for the common people. Now we're scared of his intentions. It seems to me he has sold out the common people, and we are fighting him as far as we can.

Frederick

And speaking of the union leaders who have "sold out," he says understandingly and without bitterness:

> It is partly money, partly weariness—and age has a lot to do with it. As these people get old, they haven't the strength or ability to bounce back from the constant blows and pounding. It has an effect on them and weakens them. You have to have quite a little youth to take this pounding, otherwise you haven't the ability to bounce back.

The men, like Bridges, who bounce back, are the hope of the masses in America—the hope of democracy in America.

What blows and pounding he has taken and is still taking! "You have to have quite a little youth" . . . yes, and America will have to have quite a little youth, and use every ounce of it, to save democracy in this land.

THEODORE DREISER.

"Our Democracy" is an excerpt from Mr. Dreiser's book, "America Is Worth Saving," published by Modern Age Books this week.

★

J. P.'s New Crusaders

WHILE William Allen White retires to the quiet of Kansas, an honorary chairmanship gilding his brow, the war lobby, disingenuously labeled Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, has taken steps to assure that no maverick official will ever again even playfully whisper the word "peace." To replace the 73-year-old White, a 39-year-old fellow named Gibson has been dredged up out of obscurity and made national chairman. His sole claim to fame is that he is the son of the late Sen. Ernest W. Gibson, Vermont Republican; upon the senator's death young Gibson was appointed by the governor to bask for a few brief months in the national limelight with the title of United States senator.

At the same time the executive committee of the organization transferred the real power to the national policy board of which Lewis W. Douglas was named head. Douglas was formerly President Roosevelt's director of the budget; he resigned because of opposition to the progressive course which the President was at that time pursuing. During the last campaign he was active in the Democrats-for-Willkie group. That makes it only natural that he should be for Roosevelt's war program. Douglas is president of the Mutual Life Insurance Co., which is within the Morgan sphere of influence. He will have equal rank with (though greater actual power than) Gibson. And he will enjoy the spiritual counsel of his fellow-member of the national policy board, Thomas W. Lamont of the House of Morgan.

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Bolivia: Land of Tin

Washington, London, and Berlin vie for the treasure of tin in the ancient land of the Incas. Patino and Rockefeller. The squabble for oil in the Gran Chaco jungles.

BOLIVIA is a thinly-populated, landlocked, little state, lying along the central Andean plain, and spilling down into the river valleys and jungles of the South American interior. Most of its 3,000,000 inhabitants are Indian peasants, descendants of the Incas, who work as serfs on the estates of the white aristocracy. The cities are small. Metal mining and oil extraction are the major industries.

Oil has been the subject of a bitter struggle between American-owned and British-owned oil trusts for two decades, and it was this struggle which precipitated the Chaco War, from 1932 to 1935. But of equal importance to the imperialist world is tin. A modern war cannot be fought without tin, and Bolivia is the only safe source from which the United States can obtain this metal. The only alternatives are Malaya and the Dutch East Indies, which may be cut off by Japan. For the control of tin Washington, London, and Berlin are intriguing with the Bolivian government, and a few Bolivian capitalists who are themselves sovereign powers.

Large scale tin mining began in Bolivia about 1905, and rapidly expanded until at present Bolivia accounts for 28 percent of world tin production. Tin ore makes up more than three-fourths of the value of Bolivian exports. This sudden rise of an industry to world importance, however, brought no prosperity to Bolivia. Profits from the mines were drained abroad. Some went to the government in taxes, but there was no capital left to develop the country. Bolivian agriculture remained on a feudal subsistence-level standard. For example, 75 percent of Bolivia's marketed food, the food of the miners and the urban population, is imported. And although the potato was first cultivated in Bolivia, up to the beginning of the present war Bolivia imported potatoes from Holland.

TIN MINING

Tin mining was soon concentrated in the hands of a few large capitalists, the most important of whom is Bolivia's Simon Patino. The profits from his Bolivian mines built up Patino's position in the world tin market, but he also came to have large interests in the mines of the Netherlands Indies, Malaysia, and Nigeria. Even more important, he gained control of the largest British and Dutch smelting firms. Tin is not smelted in Bolivia; it must be shipped to Great Britain, which enjoys a practical monopoly of smelters capable of handling it. Control of these smelters gave Patino mastery over his rivals in Bolivia such as Hochschild, Aramayo, and some smaller independent mineowners, who had to sell their ore to his smelting firm, Williams Harvey, Ltd. Patino's interests are so subtly distributed through a maze of holding companies that only Patino himself knows their extent or the true size of their profits. But his income is certainly much larger than the Bolivian national budget. By 1920 he had become a greater power than his native country. He subsidized its newspapers, hired its politicians, and if it ever got out of hand, he could starve it by cutting off its tin exports. In 1924 he extended his network of alliances to the United States by forming a pool with the Rockefeller-connected National Lead Co. At the same time he set up an American corporation, Patino Mines & Enterprises, to hold most of his Bolivian properties. Since then Patino Mines and National Lead have been financial Siamese twins.

PATINO'S POWER

Patino's power reached its height with the depression. In 1931 the chief tin producing countries—most of them colonies or satellites of British imperialism—formed the International Tin Committee. Through compulsory limitation of production, this cartel had raised the price of tin 130 percent above its depression low by 1935. Patino and British finance jointly controlled the cartel. Until the war, the United States tolerated this British monopoly, which was also partly linked with American capital. But American capital fears that Germany might get control of the British tin smelters, and so it takes advantage of the present situation to break the British monopoly of tin production. Smelters can be built either in Bolivia itself or in the United States. The latter course would give Bolivia a degree of economic independence, since pig tin can be sold freely. Naturally, the Roosevelt administration will not hear of such a solution. If smelters are to be built in the United States, the next question is who shall own them? When the Metal Reserves Corp. began negotiating this summer, Patino, Hochschild, and Aramayo hurried to Washington. Patino was anxious to have the proposed smelters built by his American ally, the National Lead Co. The British government did what it could to save its monopoly. The independent mineowners wanted smelters uncontrolled by Patino. The temporary solution seems to be a compromise with Great Britain, and a defeat for Patino. He will continue to send his tin ore, about half Bolivia's output, to Great Britain, while the rest of Bolivia's tin will go to the United States. Mr. Roosevelt will give some company the usual generous terms for building the smelters in the name of "national defense."

Bolivia is thus in the news again, the first time in many years since the Chaco War which was almost the only episode in Bolivia's turbulent history to attract attention in the United States. That war was fought ostensibly for an uninhabited strip of jungle lying between Bolivia and Paraguay. The actual prize was an oil field, a Standard Oil concession on Bolivian territory, coveted by Anglo-Argentine interests who used Paraguay as their catspaw. The Bolivian ruling clique of the time sent Indian peasants, who had hardly heard of Paraguay, let alone Standard Oil, down from their villages on the cold Andean plateau to fight in the tropical jungle 10,000 feet below. Fifty thousand of them died in the Chaco, many shot by their own officers when they tried to escape from the incomprehensible war. After three years of slaughter, Bolivia was defeated and impoverished. The ruling class was completely discredited. A palace revolution which expelled the war government changed nothing, since anti-war movements had been ruthlessly stamped out and the people had very little organized leadership.

On May 17, 1938, a group of army officers led by Col. David Toro seized the government. Toro tried to take advantage of the popular discontent. He confiscated Standard Oil's concession without compensation. Less than a year later he was overthrown and exiled by another army officer, Col. German Busch, who took what seemed to be even stronger anti-imperialistic measures. He instituted regulation of the tin industry which, if carried out, would have broken Patino's power. He decreed that tin exports should be sold only through the state bank, and that the bank should pay the producers in Bolivian currency at an official rate of exchange, far above the free rate, so that the government would hold the most valuable pounds and dollars. Since all the important mineowners live and have their chief interests outside Bolivia, this decree would have made their Bolivian holdings nearly worthless to them unless they had been willing to return and invest their money in Bolivian enterprises. Colonel Busch soon found, however, that enforcement of this decree would mean an international embargo on Bolivian tin unless he could find an alternative market to Britain and the United States. His measures had made him temporarily a national hero, but he was completely lacking in the economic and political experience necessary to pursue a workable anti-imperialist policy. In 1939 he committed suicide under mysterious circumstances, and his successor modified his decrees.

It must be understood that Toro and Busch were politically reactionary *caudillos*, ruling by force. They were, however, symptoms of the still undirected determination of the masses that the system which produced the Chaco War must be ended, that Bolivia must get rid of her former masters. A well

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organized movement of the workers and peasants might have swung Toro and Busch to a consistently progressive program, as Cardenas in Mexico and Batista in Cuba. Under Bolivian conditions, however, expropriation of the Standard Oil Co. resulted only in a rich field for political graft, and the state oil monopoly soon fell under the domination of the Anglo-Argentine financiers who had backed the Chaco War. The workers gained little. In 1938 Toro produced a fairly progressive constitution. It is still a dead letter.

Busch's death was followed by a union of the right wing parties, the *Concordancia,* in the effort to stabilize the situation. They put forward an inexperienced army officer, General Penaranda, as sole presidential candidate in last spring's general election. This uneasy alliance governs Bolivia at present. Two amorphous "Socialist" parties, descended from the Toro and Busch regimes, waver between the left and right.

More genuinely progressive tendencies appeared soon after the Chaco War, but still as small disunited groups. The leader in the effort to bring these together into a unified Marxist Party is Jose Antonio Arze, a university professor and former leader of the Bolivian student movement. In the election last spring his Bolivian Left Front won four seats in the mining districts, in spite of the *Concordancia's* attack upon it as Communist. (The Communist Party is illegal in Bolivia.) The Left Front followed up this victory by calling a congress at the mining town of Oruro for the purpose of forming a united Socialist party. It met on July 26 with delegates from local political groups, from fifty trade unions, from Indian and student organizations. After two meetings the congress was broken up by armed Falangists and Trotskyites, who, by a transparent coincidence, *happened* to attack it at the same time. One of the delegates was killed and thirty were injured. The government jailed the Falangists for one day, but sent most of the congress delegates to concentration camps.

THE PRISONERS

Among some of the writers, students, and organizers imprisoned in the unhealthy valleys of Chaco were: Prof. Jose Antonio Arce, president of the Institute of Sociology and secretary general of "Left Front"; Jose Murillo Vazcarreza, rector of the University of Oruro; Ricardo Anaya, Arturo Urquidio, and Lucio Alvestegui, professors at the universities of Cochabamba and Oruro; J. A. Munoz, editor of the independent newspaper of Oruro called *La Manana,* as well as Julio Rivero, a labor leader.

Their arrest occasioned wide protest throughout Latin America. The Chilean Popular Front itself made a public protest followed by the League for the Defense of the Rights of Man, the Chilean Workers Confederation, and the Teachers Association of Peru.

Despite these persecutions, the convention of July 26 accomplished its purpose, uniting the organizations represented into a new "Party of the Revolutionary Left" which is growing rapidly.

This past autumn a large-scale strike movement swept Bolivia. Prices of foodstuffs have gone up in the past year by an average of 150 percent. There have been frequent shortages of meat, sugar, rice, and flour, all of which are imported. Speculators are flourishing, despite the government's regulatory gestures. In one field after another, half-starved workers have demanded wage raises to meet the higher cost of living. First, there were strikes among the organized printers, taxi drivers, oil workers, and electrical workers. Then, in October, the railway workers came out for eight days, in defiance of a government threat to use troops. Their claims are now being negotiated; and if their demands are not met, they may strike again. Even more important were the strikes in Patino's Huanuni and Colquechaca mines. Bolivia's 60,000 mineworkers have never before been organized. The Huanuni miners, who seized the company stores and distributed the food, soon won their demands. They were led by an Indian woman—a very symbolic fact in view of the double oppression endured by women in backward countries such as Bolivia. Up to the present Bolivian trade unions have been small, confined to skilled workers, either Anarcho-Syndicalist or government-directed. These are rapidly being replaced by mass organizations under Marxist leadership.

An anti-imperialist revolution in Bolivia must also be an agrarian revolution. It must free the peasants from serfdom. In Bolivia newspaper advertisements for the sale of land emphasize not the number of acres, but the number of Indians which go with the estate. The peasants often work five days a week on their master's land in exchange for a plot which they can cultivate during the other two. They owe the landowner unpaid service at his town house and must give him a share of what they produce. The Bolivian government makes them work out their taxes in road building.

The Mexican revolution has been a portent for the Bolivian *hacendados,* the large landowners. They have resisted completely even non-political attempts to educate the Indians, anything which might help them to unite, to learn what goes on outside their own village. An Indian arrested for agitation among the peasants usually simply "disappears." The Indians have been almost entirely excluded from national life although they constitute nearly 80 percent of the population. The government has granted them one privilege, however: compulsory military service. The Indians make up the rank and file of the army which has in the past suppressed peasant revolts. Nevertheless, cooperative schools, managed by the Indians themselves, have had considerable success. Peasant unions have also been formed, though it is hard to say how much success they have had, since they must work in secret.

Times are difficult for the Bolivian workers and peasants, but the future also looks very grim to the *hacendados* and mineowners. The Bolivian ruling class sees its immediate salvation in the acceptance of complete dependence upon either the imperialists of the United States or of Germany, from whom they expect loans and arms. This does not mean that the Bolivian upper classes are wedded by any unbreakable ties of affection to either Nazi or "democratic" imperialism. They will choose whichever profits them most. Many officers and landlords prefer Nazism, but businessmen and some intellectuals prefer the Roosevelt brand of imperialism. There is, however, no deep gulf between them.

For Bolivia to free herself from imperialist domination is an exceptionally difficult task, first because of the power of the big oil companies, Standard Oil above all, and second, because of her dependence on a market for her major product—tin. Bolivia's first big job would be to recapture sovereignty over her wealth in tin and oil. The second task would be to make Bolivia self-sustaining agriculturally. That means the beginning of modernized farming. Without foreign pressure, Bolivia, like all the Latin-American nations, has all the prerequisites for prosperity and national independence based upon her own riches.

FRANK T. BAKER.

To Whom It May Concern:

Then take your pity, comfortable sir,
  Since that at best is all you ever gave us;
Pick up your fashionable pen and leave us
  And hurry off to find a publisher
Quick, while the price is high on learned libel,
  Quick, for the competition, sir, is keen:
  Explain it in a weekly magazine
Or nickel thriller—anywhere you're able,
But simply, so the most unlettered bandit
Among the powerful can understand it,
  And humbly, that the rich may be forgiving—
Explain how for an unconsidered minute
(Until you found that there was nothing in it)
You stood with those who labor for a living.

MICHAEL FINN.

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Flow Gently Sweet Aspirin

It would mean an extra thousand a year if he took the job. Laurie tried to convince him. But they both waved good-by to it. A short story.

BEFORE a fire in the tan stucco house sat Tom and Laureen Ashe. It was April outside; the locust was full of pink blossoms and looked, Laureen said, like a ghost blushing, but inside it was cold. Tom was so busy planning a program for Public Schools week to make Oilinda high-school-conscious that Laureen had to tend the fire. She had just shoved a eucalyptus chunk into the fireplace, and was going outside to sniff its smoke when the phone rang.

She ran to answer it, though she supposed it was only some youngster calling Tom about his chemistry assignment, but it was Aggie Merton, the principal's wife. Laureen was surprised for Mrs. Merton didn't, as a rule, do more than nod pleasantly to the wives of the faculty men and say good afternoon in a slow, soft bubble of a voice that threatened to founder before it cleared her chin. Mrs. Merton by no means confined her social activities to the education pool, but swam in Oilinda's best circles. Mrs. Hollingsworth, the banker's wife, Mrs. Hertz, the wife of Oilinda's leading doctor, and Mrs. Lammereaux, the widow of a railroad president, were her friends and members of her bridge club.

Even the telephone was powerless to detonate Mrs. Merton's bubbles.

"I wonder, Mrs. Ashe," she said, "if you could take Mrs. Hollingsworth's place Friday afternoon at my bridge club?"

Laureen was naturally pleased to hear this but decided not to show it too much. "I'd love to, Mrs. Merton," she said, "but you know I have my harp lesson on Friday afternoons." Just as well let her know I have a cultural interest, Laureen thought.

"Of course, Mrs. Ashe, no one realizes more than I the need of routine. I haven't been an educator's wife for twenty-five years for nothing, you know, but there are times—" The sentence broke off while bubbles of sound that were not quite words continued to curve delicately against Laureen's ear.

"You're quite right, Mrs. Merton," Laureen said. "I really can't resist. I'll be very happy to come."

Laureen pranced back to Tom and the fire. "Hey, Tom," she asked, "why's Aggie Merton such a social knockout? She's got a figure like a pouter pigeon, and she goes whoo, whoo, just like a pigeon, too."

Tom laid down his writing board and put a cigarette in his mouth. "It's the owl who goes whoo, whoo," he said. His cigarette wagged with each word. "You jealous, Laurie? You want to be the local Mrs. Astor?"

"Well, it wouldn't hurt you any," Laureen said, "if I got to be the darling of the local banking circles. Might distract attention from your subversive activities."

Tom threw his cigarette, unlighted, into the fireplace. "Subversive activities, hell. Listen, I make one speech to the Twenty-Thirtians, to define, mind you, to define—clarify, not advocate and—" He took another cigarette from his frayed pack, and began singing one of his infinite parodies, his usual response to a situation he thought couldn't be helped with words.

> Jesus, I am all confusion
> Pure unbounded chaos I.
> Fix in me some stern compulsion
> Let me be thy right hand guy.

"Okay, okay," Laureen stopped him. "But it wouldn't. And I am."

"What d'you mean you are?" Tom asked.

"That was Mrs. Merton on the phone. She wants me to play bridge with her club on Friday."

"Yeah? Going to go?"

"What do you think?"

"I don't know. You don't like bridge much, do you?"

"No, I don't like bridge but I'd play every afternoon until school's out if I thought it would help you get the vice-principalship." Laureen sat on the arm of Tom's chair and let her long bob fan out against his shoulder. "And you're going to need help if you keep dallying with that teacher's union stuff," she said somberly.

"So I've got a campaign manager," Tom said. "What's my platform?"

"Don't joke. You know that if Andrews gets the Toluma principalship, you're the logical man for his job. You're the only man in the school with your Doctor's for one thing."

"Looky, kid. That's not the way it's done. Merton wants a vice-principal who can handle discipline for him. Okay. I fit there all right. And he wants some one who can take care of curriculum revision. Okay again. That's up my alley. But he wants first of all somebody the Presbyterians like, and the Rotarians, and the American Legion. And the DAR. And I'm not so sure he'll think I'm a peg who'll fit all those holes."

"I'll bet you, though, Tom, that Mrs. Merton wouldn't be inviting me to this party if they weren't considering you. Why should she? She's never asked any of the other teachers' wives."

"What makes you think Mrs. Merton's the power behind the throne?"

"Nobody could look as much like Abe Lincoln as Ellsworth Merton does, without being a figure head. Now could he really, Tom?"

Tom laughed. "Don't let Ellie's rustic pose fool you. Under his linsey-woolsey the wheels are going round plenty fast. Why d'you want me to get this vice-principalship anyway, Laurie? There's a lot of grief in cracking down on kids. Andrews says that's the reason he has his hat in the ring at Toluma. 'I've had enough of vice-principalships,' he says. 'I'll take the head job, now, if I can get it—handle teachers and finances and let someone else go through the kids' lockers for tobacco and examples of leg art.' Why d'you want to let me in for all that, Laurie?"

"Why?" Laureen asked. "I'll tell you why. For the thousand dollars extra you'll get." But the minute she said it, she knew it wasn't that. That sure round sum. It wasn't the thousand dollars, it was the dreams—dreams of what the thousand dollars would do. But she shied away from the word dreams, too. That was what she called Tom's plans, Tom's efforts. "Dreams. Visions. Wishful thinking." "A teacher's union," Tom would say, and use the words "security" and "cooperation" and "equity." And she would answer, "Dreams, dreams. The thing to do is to think of yourself."

Was it just a case of her dreams against Tom's? A white woolen dressing gown and the harp paid for—against Tom's nice sounding words? Her dream, the white woolen dressing gown, would keep her warm on a rainy Sunday, or a windy morning—and Tom's dreams, could you warm yourself with an ideal, snuggle up cozily to a hope?

"A thousand dollars," she repeated firmly. "Maybe we could move out of this concrete box. I could go to the city for lessons."

Tom looked at her with delight. He thinks I'm just like a kid wanting things for Christmas, like a princess in a fairy tale complaining of a pea under her mattress, Laureen decided. It tickles him to look into a mind so different from his own. Her heart melted with kindness. She started to say, "What do you look forward to, Tom? What's your dream?" but let the breath she had drawn in for the words seep out in a sigh. She knew. No use hearing that Twenty-Thirty speech over again. No use having her own dream obscured.

During the week she spent a good deal of time thinking about what she should wear to Mrs. Merton's. Not her best, she decided, as if this were the party of her life. The night before she tried on her black jersey with the new drawnwork collar her mother had sent her. When she saw in the mirror how the color set off her ash blonde hair, and the way the material outlined her slender, curving figure, she decided on it at once.

"Hey, Tom," she called from the doorway of their bedroom, "is this the ticket?"

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SOCIETY NOTE: *Hillman and Knudsen Married at the White House*

"If any man can show just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together let him now speak or else hereafter forever hold his peace."

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Tom was sitting before the fire rubbing olive oil into Trudle, their shepherd. He turned toward her, but continued rubbing the dog. "Tom, tell me," she said, "is this better than my green silk?" She swayed back against the door frame, breasts arched, one bent knee advanced.

Tom rolled his eyes and began to sing, "Let me to thy bosom fly, where I—"

Laureen stopped him. "If it's the last thing I ever do, Tom Ashe, I'm going to teach you to give a reasonable answer to a reasonable question, and leave off this damned singing."

Tom filled his cupped hand with oil before he answered her. "That means learning to ask reasonable questions you know, Laurie."

Now, coming home from the party, Laureen was sure the dress had been just right. She had left Mrs. Merton's a little early while the others were still sitting about the bridge tables eating candied almonds and salted pine-nuts. She had decided it would be thoughtful to leave a little early on her first afternoon with them, so that they could have an opportunity to pool opinions about her. And then she was impatient to get home, tell Tom what Mrs. Merton had said about the vice-principalship.

Her head ached, but she walked so fast in spite of it, that the quiet evening air flowed past her face like a breeze. Suddenly she slackened her pace. Tom's at that meeting she thought, and heaven knows when he'll get home, and here I am, speeding along as if spring would give me a hot foot if I slowed down. She walked slowly for awhile trying to be a young woman appreciating a spring landscape. "Slowly walking, sweetly savoring," she said, but it didn't make it true. "The acacias are like trees of yellow pollen made by the bees, and the grass burns like flame in the vacant lots." It was no use. There weren't any words with which she could pin the spring evening to her consciousness. She was just a young woman walking through a spring landscape, and all her savoring was of what she had to tell Tom. Neither her headache nor her desire not to get home before Tom could keep her from hurrying. The meadowlarks sang their evening notes, clear as shadowless water, and the cars of men coming home from work turned into home driveways, but Laureen heard neither.

Tom, Tom, she thought, it's in the bag. Aggie's giving you a big buildup. You should have heard how she introduced me. "I want you to meet Dr. Ashe's wife," she'd said. "Dr. Ashe is on Ellsworth's faculty you know. We're very proud of him. No doubt you've read of his work in developing new techniques in remedial reading." You wouldn't have thought that she knew the words, would you? But she knew them—she's learned them. She's building you up. She put me at her table for tea. Andrews has Toluma, Tom. Aggie said so, and she said, "We need a young, progressive man to take Andrews' place." That's you, Tom. "Progressive," she said, "not radical. Not one of these men who is more interested in getting teachers organized than in teaching." You might have thought she knew where you were this afternoon. Oh Tom, Tom, why will you? But I covered you beautifully. "Whatever teachers do is of interest to Tom," I said. "He believes it is impossible to deal successfully with what you don't understand." That was the best I could do, seeing that she might know exactly where you were. She "ah-yes-ed" that, but then she bubbled, "It would be best, wouldn't it, dear Mrs. Ashe, if he avoided even the appearance—" The bubble broke then. You know how it does, and she said, "But I'm sure I can leave that to you, Mrs. Ashe." And I said, "Yes, you can," and I meant it, Tom—if I'm not too late.

Laureen pulled off her little flowered turban and rubbed her hand across the hot, damp band it had made across her forehead—but the ache in her head needed more than rubbing to cure it. Venus was shining now, a golden lantern, and the western hills were already dark. If only Tom would be home, Laureen thought. All I want in this world is two aspirin and Tom to be home when I get there. That's not much to want. Until she rounded the big liveoak at the corner of Madrona she wouldn't be able to see the house. She walked past it with her eyes shut and then, opening them suddenly, she saw Tom's car in front of the house, the light on in their bedroom.

She was out of breath when she opened the front door.

"Tom, Tom," she called.

"Here," he answered from the bathroom. "I'm washing up."

She went into their bedroom and lay down across the bed, kicking off her pumps and putting the cool pillow across her forehead. "Bring me a couple of aspirin when you come out, will you, Tom?"

"Soon as I dry," he said. "Got a headache?"

"Lousy. Just started though." She was tired now of the long story she had rehearsed for Tom. She wanted only to tell him quickly, and find out quickly. "Andrews got Toluma all right," she called.

"Yeah?" Tom answered, his voice revealing nothing.

"And the vice-principalship is yours—if you want it enough."

"What do you mean—want it enough?" She heard him take one foot down from the edge of the bath tub, put the other one up.

"You can't have it and this union stuff, too. They don't go together. Aggie said so. You'll have to make up your mind, Tom," she said with sudden intensity, sitting up so that the pain in her head boomed. "What did you do this afternoon? Tell me. I can't bear to wait."

Laureen listened so hard her head seemed to throb in unison with the soft backward and forward swish of Tom's towel. Swish—throb, swish—throb. Just so he doesn't sing, Laureen thought. Just so he doesn't start some cock-eyed parody. If he does that I'll know it's all over, his name signed, his word given.

"Tom," she called. "You'll rub your skin off. I'm waiting for those aspirin."

"Okay, Laurie." Tom came out in slippers and shorts, with a glass of water in one hand, and the aspirin bottle in the other. Laurie held out her hand and he tipped two aspirin into her palm. But she couldn't swallow them—they wouldn't help her until she knew. "You didn't sign anything this afternoon, did you? You didn't commit yourself—did you, Tom?"

Tom dropped the aspirin bottle on the bed, took the two aspirin out of her hand, popped them into her mouth, and held the glass of water to her lips.

> Flow gently, sweet aspirin, [he sang]
> Between her pale flanks,
> Flow gently, sweet aspirin
> A-down her fair banks.

Laurie swallowed the aspirin, and lay back on the bed with the pillow across her eyes again. For a minute she was lost and sad—her dream was gone and she didn't know her way about in Tom's dream yet—maybe she never would. And then, somehow she had a strange feeling of happiness, not very strong, not very definite—like a splinter of light slipping under a blind into a dark room. But it was there.

She lifted one hand and waved her fingers gently.

"What's the matter, Laurie?" Tom asked. "What're you doing?"

"Waving good-bye to the vice-principal," Laurie said.

Tom sat down on the bed. "You might not have liked him much anyway, Laurie."

"That's just what I was thinking," she said.

JESSAMYN WEST MCPHERSON.

★

Soviet Scene

THERE were two more items of interest from the USSR this week. The first is that the Soviet Pavilion at the World's Fair is being reassembled after a long train ride across Siberia in 400 railway cars. It will stand in the Moscow Park for Rest and Culture. This is a reply to those circles in this country who charged that the Pavilion was propaganda. It couldn't have been, because propaganda is something which you tell other peoples and conceal from your own. But the Soviet state has no worries on this score. Millions of Soviet citizens will now have the opportunity to see the exhibits which some 16,000,000 Americans saw at the Fair.

The second item tells us that the Council of People's Commissars has ordered an expansion of consumers' goods because the production of these goods "has been lagging behind the growing demands of the population." Here is a revealing contrast between two systems of society: in this country, as its ruling class prepares for war, there is a deliberate campaign to reduce consumers' goods production. The President himself in his fireside chat spoke of diverting factories which produce consumers' goods to the manufacture of tanks and guns. But in the USSR, where immense energies are also being devoted to the increased porduction of defense equipment, the nature of socialist economy is such that it can also provide for increasing rather than decreasing the output of goods that the people need for everyday living.

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A BRITISH M.P. WRITES US

A letter from William Gallacher

London.

THE American people are being dragged to the very brink of war. Whenever the interests of the "dollar" imperialists demand it they will be plunged into the maelstrom. All the time the imperialists of Britain, with their servile Labor lackeys, are trying to hurry on the process. Talk there is in plenty of freedom and democracy, but the war is a war for empire, for territory, markets, and profits unlimited.

For years the imperialist rulers of Britain worked for war. They destroyed whatever value the League of Nations might have had and wrecked every attempt to unify the forces in Europe that might have preserved peace. They wanted war—they worked for war—but not in the form in which it has come upon them. They gave Hitler every encouragement, every assistance, to build up a great army and a great air force, satisfied that when this was accomplished, he would advance against the Soviet Union with the full backing and support of his friends in Britain.

A well known American Catholic journalist, Captain McCullough, quoted in the Catholic press of this country, justified and defended Chamberlain's policy of driving the Nazis against the Soviet Union. It was a great idea. Only if Captain McCullough could see it, maybe also the leaders of the Soviet Union could see it. In fact, six months before the war, Stalin warned the British and French imperialists that their war policy would end in fiasco for themselves.

If Germany and Soviet Russia had gone to war, the British imperialists would have made a mint of money supplying Germany with arms (maybe some out-of-date torpedo boats), and then when the contestants were exhausted, would have waded in and settled how Europe and the East were to be divided up.

"Fiasco" as foretold by Stalin has attended their plans, and so instead of Britain supplying arms to Germany for a war of exhaustion against the Soviet Union, American imperialists are supplying arms to Britain in a war which means the destruction of Britain as a rival to American imperialism. But behind all this mad, monstrous orgy of destruction, there is ever-increasing hatred of the Soviet Union and the rapid advance of fascist methods for suppressing the working class.

The imperialists of Britain are not at war against Hitler because they abhor the brutalities of the Nazis, or because they object to fascism. Three months after the war started (December 1939) a pamphlet was published entitled "The British Case." It was written by Lord Lloyd, a member of the present government, and it had an introduction by none other than that "holy man of God," who occupied the position of Foreign Secretary and is now the new ambassador to the United States—Lord Halifax. After the usual slanders on the Soviet Union, we get on page 37 a touching tribute to the beauties of fascism, in the midst of which is the following gem:—

> Above all, the Italian genius has developed, in the characteristic Fascist institution, a highly authoritarian regime which, however, threatens neither religious nor economic freedom, nor the security of other European nations.

Their dear old pal "Napolini" seems to have let them down. But not nearly so much as Hitler.

When the leaders of the Soviet Union, in order to break up the combination that the British imperialists were trying to organize against it, signed the non-aggression pact with Germany, the Labor lackeys howled about the desertion of democracy, a practice at which they themselves have had long experience. But what have the imperialists to say about it? Did they see in it the "betrayal of democracy"? Far from it. On page 53 of "The British Case," we read:—

> This was Herr Hitler's final apostasy. *It was the betrayal of Europe.*

Thus Europe, in their eyes, was to be an armed camp of capitalist states with all their power directed against the Soviet Union. But in order to avoid any doubt as to the actual war they wanted, they offer the extremely illuminating passage on page 55:—

> In Herr Hitler's case the appearances of sincerity were not lacking over a period of years. . . . However abominable his methods, however deceitful his diplomacy, however intolerant he might show himself of the rights of other European peoples, he still claimed to stand ultimately for something which was common European interest, and which therefore could conceivably provide some day a basis for understanding with other nations equally determined not to sacrifice their traditional institutions and habits on the bloodstained altars of World Revolution.

Having failed to turn Hitler eastward, the war of clashing imperialists became inevitable.

Those of us who are fighting to bring the war to an end, to extricate the people from the horrors that decaying capitalism has brought upon them, see the way of peace through a People's Government that will arouse the people throughout Europe for a people's peace, a peace with no annexations and no indemnities. A peace that will give freedom to the people everywhere. Such a government would speak in a language that the people of Europe would understand. It would give freedom to India and all oppressed colonial peoples. It would open the prison gates and liberate Nehru and the hundreds of Indians who are the victims of imperialist oppression. It would take over the land and the wealth of the country and use it to advance the welfare of the masses of the people. This is the only language the people of Europe will understand and appreciate.

The American people can play a great part in shaping history and progress by leading the fight for peace, by defeating the plans of the millionaire imperialists, and striving for friendship and understanding with the mighty Soviet Union. Such a combination of forces working together would be of immeasurable value to those in Britain and the continent who are working for peace. The American people have a great responsibility. The imperialists and their Labor lackeys, titled and untitled, endeavor to create all kinds of illusions. Let the American people look not to these enemies of the people, but to the true friends of all that is best and noblest in the traditions of America—let them look to the Communist Party of America whose courageous fight and wise guidance has continually pointed the true path for the American people.

Cooperation for peace and freedom for all oppressed peoples, that is the service you in America can give to the people of Europe and Asia.

WILLIAM GALLACHER.

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Seventeen Years After

When Lenin died, a whole world grieved. Not the world of the high-born and wealthy, not the climbers and careerists, not the buyers and sellers of other people's happiness, but the world of the common people, the workers and farmers, the fighters for great causes, the creative masses and builders of mankind's future in all countries. To them Lenin and Lenin's work were something out of their own lives, their own pain and hope and striving. He had hacked a road through the wilderness, he had defied the power of organized tyranny and written in imperishable letters over one-sixth of the earth's surface the great liberating word: socialism. Millions who did not know exactly what that word meant knew that in what had once been the prison-house of Russia something new was stirring, and ordinary men and women for the first time in history bowed to no master but themselves.

It was seventeen years ago when Lenin died. And today the ideas of Lenin and all his work are more living than ever. For Lenin was one of those great seminal minds that really change the world, that make rich and fertile the thinking and doing of millions after them. He began where another giant, Marx, ended, and he created in giant mold what Stalin has defined as "the Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution." What this means is that in this modern time, when capitalism has grown into the octopus of monopoly, Lenin, basing himself on Marx, discovered the laws that govern its life and death and fashioned the instruments for freeing humanity from its grasp. He was a vast continent of thought and action—the analyst of imperialism, the founder of the Bolshevik Party, the fighter against imperialist war, the superlative theoretician on the question of the state and of the national problem, the organizer of the proletarian revolution, the builder of the first socialist society.

Lenin once said that the ideas of Marx are powerful because they are true. It may seem like an obvious statement, but it is the all-powerful truth of Marxism which capitalism cannot tolerate and combats with all the arsenals of falsehood and terror at its command. For us in America Lenin is no more alien than Newton or Galileo. Internationalism is part of our own democratic tradition, and Jefferson, Paine, Franklin were internationalists—the "Reds" of their day. What the ideas of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Jefferson were for an earlier age, the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin are for our own. Thus socialism represents the fulfillment of our own American dream. And in a capitalist world wallowing in blood and agony, the friendship of Lenin's and Stalin's land, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, offers us hope of peace and expanding democracy.

The People's Convention

The latest news we have of the People's Convention in London is great news: the main meeting was so large that two additional halls had to be hired. Some 2,500 delegates attended, defying both the Nazi fire bombs dropping all over London, and the threat of the Home Minister, Herbert Morrison, to suppress them. The representation was so genuine and broad that the government chose the path of caution in dealing with this convention. It was news which broke into the newspapers: correspondents from many countries came to sneer and stayed to listen. In Britain itself, the convention forced the press to give it the recognition it deserved. The main demand was for the protection of the living standards and liberties of the masses, looking forward to a People's Government that will bring the war to an end. Denis N. Pritt, the left Socialist MP, seems to have been a dominant figure, and brought with him the support of local groups of the Labor Party throughout Britain. Dozens of leading figures in the trades unions spoke up, especially among the building workers, railways, engineers, and coal miners, as well as delegates from the cooperatives, the Communist Party, and members of the armed forces. The National committee elected at the convention pledged to carry forth the fight for the enlarged eight-point program.

This is clearly a beginning, but it is a step which—in the hindsight of history—may appear to have been the decisive development in Britain this winter. We assume that Harry Hopkins, the President's personal emissary, had his ears to the ground, and will fill the President's ear with the story when he returns. Long before that, New Masses hopes to have the documents and major speeches of the convention for its readers.

What Price Food?

The British government has consented to lift its blockade against France, Spain, and perhaps Finland. The State Department made it known last week that quantities of food, vitamins, and such, will be shipped to these countries through the medium of the Red Cross. This is an interesting development. For it will be remembered that the British government a few weeks ago declined to endorse Herbert Hoover's pet project of feeding the German-dominated areas of Europe on the grounds that this would help Hitler. Evidently, Churchill has now decided that France, Spain, and Finland are not German-dominated; either that, or FDR has succeeded where Herbert Hoover failed.

But something deeper is involved here, something which will be understood only against the larger canvas of events. It cannot be a coincidence that the new food policy comes in the very week that Admiral Leahy arrived in Vichy. The admiral, it will be recalled, emphasized his confidence that Britain would win the war. Simultaneously, the President's New Year greeting to Marshal Petain was made public, in which he expressed the hope that "liberty, fraternity, and equality" would soon be restored in France —rather obvious, is it not, what both these gentlemen mean? This was also the week in which the Spanish newspapers played up reports of Mr. Roosevelt's message to Congress; Robert Murphy, American attache in Vichy, arrived in North Africa to visit Marshal Weygand, and the mysterious Colonel Donovan turned up in Cairo, Egypt.

The shipment of food, clear as day, is only one phase of a general diplomatic intervention in Europe which Mr. Roosevelt is presently carrying through, an intervention to sound out the chances of winning allies to Britain's side, or at least "neutralizing" potential enemies. The President has irons in the fire in Finland, in North Africa, in Vichy, in Madrid, in Rome, and even in the Near East. Important decisions of policy, in anticipation of developments in the spring, are about to be made. It is not the feeding of people which he is concerned with; for in this same week, the British applied a blockade against Ireland which means starvation in that country unless it follows London's wishes concerning bases for British navy and American supplies. The food which Mr. Roosevelt offers is salted with hypocrisy. It is food with strings attached. It should be food for thought wherever it goes.

Soviet Trade

The new Soviet-German trade agreement would be a significant event in itself. But coming as it did in a week of the wildest rumors of an imminent crisis in Soviet-German relations, allegedly because of German troop concentrations on the Bulgarian frontier, the trade agreement must be considered as a diplomatic measure of larger importance. Once again, the USSR makes it clear that it looks forward to pacific relations with the dominant capitalist power in Europe irrespective of the particular course which the next stage of the war may take.

At the same time, *Pravda* and *Izvestia* reemphasize Soviet intention to expand its trade relations with all powers whether belligerent or not. It is well known that a new trade agreement between Britain and the USSR has been hanging fire for almost two years. The problem seems to lie in the British demand that the USSR limit its trade relations in conformity with the British blockade against Germany. British officials, such as Ronald

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Cross, Churchill's shipping minister, have even suggested that the United States cut down its own trade with the USSR, a trade which has been flourishing in some lines of goods and bids fair to exceed by one and a half times the specifications of the Soviet-American treaty of last August. The British are insinuating, in this country, without any evidence, that the large Soviet purchases of American copper and cotton are indirectly reaching Germany.

The British attitude, which has considerable support in the United States, is a compound of arrogance and hypocrisy. The fact is that Britain and the United States are continuing their extensive trade with Japan, who is Germany's direct ally; at the same time both of these powers are trading, and planning to enlarge their trade, with Franco's Spain. Even if it were true, therefore, that Soviet purchases are indirectly reaching Germany, the British and American objections are hypocritical. But these objections also smack of arrogance. Even Hitler, so far as we know, does not dare to demand that the USSR cease trading with the United States, or refuse to do business with England as the condition of German trade with the Soviet Union.

The truth is that the USSR is an independent power in world affairs. The British may control the seas but they cannot bend the USSR to their will as has been their custom with large and small states in the past. Soviet trade policy reflects its political policy. As the imperialist world involves itself deeper in the war, and plunges unwilling peoples into it, the ruling classes of Britain and the United States express their guilt-feeling by railing against Soviet neutrality. They resent this neutrality. Even more, they fear it.

The CIO Resolutions

THE New York *Times* was perfectly right to bury on page forty the resolutions adopted at the CIO executive board meeting. For weeks the *Times* had been headlining pleas by Sidney Hillman that labor cooperate with the administration, and had been prominently displaying frequent statements by William Green that whatever President Roosevelt demanded from labor was O.K. with him, regardless of the price. No headline had seemed too big to honor John P. Frey and his metal trades cohorts when they gladly relinquished the right to strike. So why complicate matters by making much of the CIO's determination to continue fighting labor's battles?

Fortunately, the position taken by the CIO executive board meeting more than answered the betrayal by Green and his associates. While Federation officials bowed reverently to big business, the heads of forty-two CIO unions—who, unlike their AFL counterparts, spoke for their 4,000,000 membership—enunciated a realistic program for safeguarding the American workers. There was nothing hesitant about the CIO board's forthright demand for improved wages and living conditions. With one-third of the 30,000,000 workers in industry, commerce, and transportation receiving annual incomes of less than $500, with two-thirds earning less than $1,000 a year, and with profits of the leading manufacturing corporations in the first nine months of 1940 higher by 42 percent than in 1939—with such inequalities, the CIO could prove only too graphically that labor was being consistently and drastically underpaid.

"Constant vigilance must be exercised to protect hard-won legislative gains," resolved the CIO board. "March onward with a legislative program for extended social and pro-

The Lease-Lend Dictatorship

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT's new dictatorial bill to get the United States into war reminds us of what that picturesque commentator of an older day, Petroleum V. Nasby, wrote concerning the machinations of President Andrew Johnson: "The President does not believe that power should be concentrated in three or four hundred men in Congress, but thinks it ought to be safely diffused throughout the hands of one man."

What began as a lend-lease plan—by itself an evasion of the Neutrality and Johnson acts and a long step toward direct military participation in the European conflict—has emerged as a gargantuan scheme for adjourning representative government and placing in the hands of one man unlimited power to commit acts of war in defiance of the Constitution and "notwithstanding the provisions of any other law." It is breath-taking, this soaring blueprint for fascism. It could have been drawn only by men drunk with their own arrogance, consumed by a passion to foist upon the world their brand of "democracy" equalled only by Hitler's passion to bestow the blessings of his brand of "socialism." There is a scientific name for this passion: imperialism. And its life-blood is big business.

The new bill would empower the President—and the President alone—to:

1. Manufacture in American factories and shipyards and "sell, transfer, exchange, lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of" to any government he pleased anything from a nail to the entire American navy and air force. The approval of the Chief of Staff or Chief of Naval Operations would no longer be required and there would be no need for any such legalistic subterfuges as those which Attorney General Jackson wrung out of the depths of his soul to justify the transfer of fifty destroyers to Britain.

2. Repair or outfit any "defense article" whether belonging to the United States or another country. According to Senator Barkley and Representative McCormack, who introduced the bill, this would mean that "the British battle cruiser Renown could be repaired in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. . . . The provision is broad enough to permit the use of any of our military, naval, or air bases to outfit and repair the weapons of countries whose defense is vital to the defense of the United States." All of which is in explicit violation of the President's own neutrality proclamation of Sept. 5, 1939, the declaration of the Pan-American conference at Panama on Oct. 3, 1939, and the Hague convention of 1907.

3. Turn over to a foreign government secret military information or designs such as the secret bomb-sight.

4. Determine what, if anything, foreign governments shall give in return for the war materials they receive from the United States.

5. Buy arms from other countries.

6. "Promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary and proper to carry out any of the proposals of this act." This might mean convoying of ships with war materials to Britain, seizure of foreign shipping in American ports, suspension of civil liberties, or anything else the President deemed "necessary."

Thus this bill would make America merchant of death to the world, leaving to President Roosevelt sole decision as to which wars and which governments to support with arms. It would also enable the President to provide arms to fascist dictatorships for the suppression of popular uprisings. In the words of the New York *Times*' Arthur Krock, an ardent supporter of the Roosevelt foreign policy: "No President ever had such powers as this bill outlines, not even in wartime." And the fact that it has been given the blessing of Wendell Willkie is a fitting commentary on the solemn pre-election promises both major candidates made to do everything in their power to keep America out of war. Alfred Landon's comment had, for once, a fitting trenchancy: "If Mr. Willkie had revealed (his position) before the Republican national convention, he would not have been nominated, and if Mr. Roosevelt had revealed it before the election, he would not have been re-elected."

By his attempt to seize unlimited dictatorial power Roosevelt betrays his own fear of public discussion of his various steps to war. But he may have overreached himself. Already the new bill has evoked considerable opposition in Congress and in the country. The plain people of America can vote down this totalitarian measure. They have a rendezvous with their congressmen.

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gressive legislation." This means greater appropriations for WPA, for public health and housing, the passage of anti-lynch legislation, the wiping out of the poll-tax, the preservation of the Wage-Hour, Walsh-Healey, and Labor Relations acts.

On the central issue of the right to strike, the CIO refused to consider relinquishing this all-important labor weapon, urging its membership to "guard against any action which, under the pretense of furthering national defense, will seek to deprive workers of . . . their fundamental right to organization into unions of their own choice or to strike." Only in the endorsement of the Reuther plan to increase the production of war planes and in the unfortunate omission of all discussion on the administration's foreign policy did the CIO board fail to act in the best interests not only of its members but of all organized and unorganized workers. Yet the board did not give, as had the AFL-Hillman group, positive endorsement to the administration's war plans. Two months ago, at the CIO convention, the unions had passed strong resolutions opposing American involvement in war. The CIO is still bound by these resolutions, and the board could have aided resistance to war by openly denouncing the administration's efforts to drag America into the European conflict.

Hillman and Knudsen

WHILE organized labor deliberated, Sidney Hillman, "labor" spokesman in the defense administration, was raised even unto the heights occupied by William Knudsen. Labor and capital thus became "equals" by presidential decree. Henceforth, the partners could jointly rule the newly created Office of Production Management, which is to arm America just in case the President decides he would enjoy tasting the glories of commanding a mighty nation in a mighty war.

According to *Look* magazine, Mr. Hillman's labor credo can be expressed as follows: "We help the employers." As co-director of the OPM he will be able to carry on. He will have the support of the bankers and the corporations. As the *Times* neatly put it, whatever resistance there may arise will merely "come from the AFL and the CIO." In other words, everyone is for it except labor and labor's allies among the farmers, the professionals, and the middle classes. But that will not deter Hillman. His task is to sell war, to "speak" for labor whether or not labor likes what he says. He will hold his exalted post so long as he does his job of taking orders from Mr. Knudsen. As the press did not fail to point out, it is all right to have two equal heads of the defense administration so long as Mr. Knudsen is the *real* head.

Albany Witch Hunt

ON THE heels of Governor Lehman's opening message to the New York legislature devoted entirely to preparing for war, two bills have been introduced by the Democratic leader, Sen. John J. Dunnigan. One bill would deny public office to any member of an organization "antagonistic to the fundamental principle of the democratic form of government and to the individual liberties and rights of citizens." The second reveals the real intent of its companion piece: it denies the right of representation on the ballot to political parties whose members are ineligible to public office.

Both these bills are frankly designed to outlaw the Communist Party though it is not the Communists, but men like Senator Dunnigan who are "antagonistic to the fundamental principle of the democratic form of government." Moreover, other minority parties that advocate mild reforms such as government ownership of certain industries might conceivably also be denied suffrage. Enforcement of the law would require the establishment of a secret investigating bureau to ferret out the "dangerous thoughts" of American citizens.

James Joyce

JAMES JOYCE's influence on younger writers had begun to decline long before his death in Zurich last week. To disillusioned novelists of the post-war decade, the author of *Ulysses* appeared as the prophet of a new and liberated literature. At the end of the thirties one can look back and see that Joyce was merely the most brilliant expression of an older literature which had lost its vitality and its capacity for hope. For Joyce was essentially the philosopher of social pessimism, doom, and bitter negation. He had cut the lines of communication with the outside world, living in voluntary exile not only from his native Ireland but from the masses of mankind. A man of encyclopedic learning, great technical dexterity, and unusual sensitivity to the sound and color of words, James Joyce seemed intent on perverting his talent as a gesture of revolt against a world which he despised. But like all nihilists he failed to conquer the world; he was conquered by it. His rejection of logical consciousness, his contempt for humanity, his disintegration of social language was the literary reflection of the anarchic and destructive impulses of capitalist society. Joyce led to the brink of moral and intellectual self-annihilation. It is little wonder that so many of the younger generation of writers, turning to the working classes for courage and creativity, have repudiated Joyce's outlook and the decadent bourgeois order which distorted his great gifts.

The APM Advances

LAST September when the American Peace Mobilization organized a people's lobby against the Burke-Wadsworth bill, it met with fierce opposition from the Washington police and the administration. A new campaign is now forming against the President's demand for war powers. It began on December 20 when eastern leaders of APM interviewed administration officials in the state and labor departments and the National Defense Advisory Commission. On January 3, a larger delegation interviewed members of leading congressional committees and heard Senator Wheeler denounce the President's lend-lease plan.

A Working Conference for Peace is scheduled for January 25 in Washington when approximately 150 APM representatives from eastern seaboard states, all the way from Alabama to Maine, will plan further organizational steps. On February 1, 1,500 delegates will journey to the capital in a mass lobby against the new dictatorial bill, ironically designated HR 1776. However, the program of the American Peace Mobilization is not only devoted to keeping America out of war. It advocates also the extension of social legislation; it opposes anti-labor proposals such as the Smith no-strike bill. The APM likewise is working to defend the democratic rights of draftees and is especially active in the growing struggle against Negro discrimination in the army, navy, and marine corps. The APM comprises members from many trade unions, church and community organizations; they are now conducting a door-to-door campaign, organizing the people's crusade for peace as against the bankers' war crusade of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies.

The War Budget

WHEN President Roosevelt said in his fireside chat that if Germany defeats Britain, "we would have to convert ourselves permanently into a militaristic power on the basis of war economy," NEW MASSES asked whether that wasn't exactly what the administration was doing now. The proposed new budget proves it. Nearly eleven out of seventeen and a half billion dollars are to be devoted to preparations for war.

A government's budget is an index of its social policy. In his budget message the President said that total defense "means warships, freighters, tanks, planes and guns . . .; and jobs, health and security to strengthen the bulwarks of democracy." Glittering words, but they cannot cover the naked reality of this budget. It proposes to spend 67 percent *more* than the enormous sums voted last year for warships, freighters, tanks, planes, and guns; it proposes to spend 15 percent *less* than the inadequate sums appropriated last year for jobs, health, and security. But even these ghastly figures do not give the full truth. For they do not include the additional billions to be appropriated for arming Britain if the new lend-lease bill passes Congress.

The largest reduction, $400,000,000, is in WPA despite the fact that there are still nearly 1,000,000 workers who have been certified for WPA and are unable to get on the rolls. Howard Hunter, acting WPA administrator, revealed that these budget figures

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mean pink dismissal slips for some 500,000 workers during the next few months. Appropriations for the work of the Department of Agriculture are cut from $1,027,958,922 to $885,796,471. This includes a reduction of about $35,000,000 for the disposal of surplus commodities through the food stamp plan and other channels. Funds for public works are likewise slashed. The President also recommended high additional taxes to meet part of the war expenditures.

What does this guns-versus-butter budget mean in human terms? It means, in the first place, vastly increased profits for the monopolies. It means some re-employment and a growing tendency to longer hours, while millions continue unemployed and have their meager relief further curtailed. It means less money for the farmers whose income has already dropped because of the loss of foreign markets as a result of the war. It means higher taxes based, President Roosevelt assures us, "on the principle of ability to pay," which, judging by the last two tax measures passed by Congress, will be translated into "based on the ability to make the people pay." It means creating a tremendous stake in the continuation and spread of the imperialist war and building up an artificial war boom whose collapse will compound manyfold the horrors of 1929-33.

Mr. Green on the Rampage

WE INDICATED last week that William Green and his agents in the American Federation of Teachers are bent on wrecking the entire union for the sake of removing the progressive opposition. Fresh evidence leaves no room for doubt concerning the purposes of the Green-Counts group. The unconstitutional attack on Local 5 of New York has now been followed by a similar attack on Local 537, largest college teachers' chapter in the country, and on Local 453, largest WPA group. The Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers and the Philadelphia chapter have also been announced as intended victims of the drive to break up the union before the national convention next August. Removal of local charters so far threatened by the executive council would eliminate 10,000 members, almost a third of the Federation. Similar action may be expected against dozens of chapters which have consistently opposed the union's reactionary leadership.

Pres. Robert K. Speer of the college teachers' group last week charged that "The action of the National Council represents a desperate desire on its part to assure its control by eliminating the locals which have challenged its neglect of educational issues and its policy of appeasing the enemies of education." Local 537 has issued a documented letter, unanimously approved at a membership meeting last week, exposing to all affiliated bodies the ruinous and dictatorial methods being employed by the ruling cabal in the national organization. William Green and his machine politicians are going to have the fight of their lives.

China Fights On

FROM time to time there have been reports of serious friction within China's united front. Local magistrates and petty officials in the Border government where the Eighth Route Army operates have frequently taken it upon themselves to harass guerrilla warriors and their leaders. The same has been true in central China where the New Fourth Army is based on territory recaptured from Japan. Not merely the troops under Communist leadership, but units of the democratically re-organized armies of Yen Shi-san have been the butt of similar interference. And while such stories have unquestionably been exaggerated by Japanese news agencies operating from Shanghai, there has nevertheless been a basis for them. Last week, the New York *Herald Tribune* published a report by Edgar Snow to the effect that the Eighth Route Army areas are being surrounded by troops of the central government; that the New Fourth Army corps has been ordered to withdraw north of the Yangtse river; the effort is being made to isolate these two main guerrilla armies from the rest of China. This is reminiscent of ten years back, when the bitter anti-Communist campaign in China enabled Japan to gobble up Manchuria and the northern provinces preparatory to the deeper penetration of China after July 1937. While it would not be true to say that the united front will not weather this crisis, it is true that right wing sections of the Kuomintang are making "anti-Communism" their main concern at a time when the whole Chinese people stand on the eve of new victories against the invader.

This friction is not a new phenomenon. All during 1939 there were serious incidents in the border region. Reactionary local officials took it upon themselves to abduct commanders of the Eighth Route Army. Often, guerrilla fighters, cut off from their companies, were found murdered, not by Japanese but by Chinese bullets. Trucks and equipment belonging to the guerrilla troops were pilfered.

About a year ago, Mao Tse-tung and leading Communist commanders protested to the People's Political Council, the advisory body to the Chungking government, in which all political forces are represented. Under Chiang Kai-shek's leadership, the disputes were apparently adjusted. The territory of the Border government was defined; larger funds for the struggle were promised. Preparations went ahead for a constitutional convention to be held in November 1940. The perspective was the expansion of democracy, universal suffrage, a secret ballot, economic rehabilitation. But this convention was postponed. Things got worse. Even though two reactionary generals were executed upon Chiang Kai-shek's order early in December, it was still possible for Ho Ying-chin, minister of war at Chungking—a man who was opposed to unity from the beginning and who has been flirting with Japan—to order new measures against the guerrilla armies.

It must always be remembered that China has been governed by one party, the Kuomintang, which is itself composed of very diverse elements. Despite its wide influence and undeniable work for national salvation, the Chinese Communist Party has not been legalized. Troops under its leadership have always been provisioned meagerly. Much of their money, food, equipment, and succor has been volunteered by the people in the areas of their jurisdiction. Incidentally, all of the steady assistance from the Soviet Union has been going to the central authorities, who have rationed it as they saw fit.

Economic conditions have worsened within China during the past year. Profiteering exists, graft and corruption among certain circles of the bureaucracy is rife; the masses insist that semi-feudal officials mend their ways if the struggle against the invasion is to succeed. For although these officials and their mentors in the Kuomintang right wing have been the first to waver in the face of hardships, the masses, irrespective of organizational affiliation and political belief, realize that Japan has over-reached herself, that out of the present stalemate, victory is possible.

The changing international situation has had its effect among governing circles. Japan delayed recognition of the Wang Ching-wei puppet regime for many months in the hope of attracting substantial elements from Chungking. Germany, whose influence in China is not generally realized, also favors a "peace" with Japan on terms favorable to the Axis. The closing of the Burma road by the British did not help matters. And after the British and American currency loans in November, some circles in the Kuomintang felt sufficiently cocky to renew their campaign against the democratic forces, even though the motivation of British and American support for China was presumably to help China.

It is an obvious proposition that China can win her national independence only if she remains united, only if the democratization of the government and the correction of economic abuses rally all forces to united efforts. Millions of Americans who have followed the fabulous deeds of the guerrillas, who have done so much for China's medical relief, for the industrial cooperatives, for the boycott of Japanese silk must renew their demand for large scale assistance to China on long term credit conditions. And this must be coupled with a full embargo on Japan. The United States, whose spokesmen have so often repeated professions of good will to China, must throw her weight against all forces undermining the united front. In this situation, more clearly than ever the most immediate assistance for China would be the forthright collaboration between the Soviet and American governments. Given all this, the democratic forces within the Kuomintang, the guerrillas, the millions of staunch fighters in China can brush aside all obstacles to victory.

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Readers' Forum

Iron-Bound Brothers

To New Masses: A tired radical once told me the progressive movement was a contest to see if they could get people out of jail faster than reaction could railroad them. It isn't that. But a large part of every movement for human betterment since history began has had to devote itself to that task.

We can't forget our own. Jailing and killing are the traditional means by which corrupt powers have always sought to crush new ideas and forestall the consequences of their own failure.

Thus every decent movement in history has had to fight for the freedom of its jailed martyrs. This fight is always symbolic and an integral part of the struggle for greater objectives.

If it were merely a contest, then I should say they are gaining on us now, at least temporarily. Personally, I cannot keep track of the frame-ups and railroadings which are now taking place in almost every part of the country.

It is neat and convenient when you have a single point of concentration—a Sacco and Vanzetti case or a Mooney case. But today we are faced with the confusion of abundance. We have so many brave men to defend and so many martyrs to free that our efforts are apt to spread thin if not disciplined and intelligently directed.

This is not a sign of weakness on our part. It is exactly when we are strong that reaction casts discretion to the winds and begins jailing men in cowardly desperation.

The freedom of Tom Mooney was an encouraging achievement. Whether Governor Olsen of California issued the full pardon out of a square heart or as a political strategy is a moot question. We can answer it better when we see what action he takes in the matter of Earl King, Ernest Ramsay, and Frank Conner, three maritime union men who have now served almost four years in San Quentin penitentiary on a frame-up as corrupt and contemptible as any in history.

There is a reason for directing attention to their case at this time. The governor is quite aware of their innocence. He also has the petitions of both the AFL and CIO before him requesting a pardon. Expressions of additional sincere support from other sections of the country may very well tip the scales in his mind.

A political embarrassment exists in the fact that Earl Warren, who prosecuted the case, has since become state attorney general. Documentary evidence has been secured proving that one of the jurors who swore under oath that she was not acquainted with the prosecution, was actually an intimate personal friend of one of Warren's assistants and had loaned him $15,376 without any security.

The case itself concerned the murder of Chief Engineer George W. Alberts of the freighter *Point Lobos* who was found stabbed to death in his cabin on March 22, 1936. Neither King, Ramsay, nor Conner could possibly have committed the crime, nor are they so accused. King and Ramsay, officials of the Marine Firemen's Union, were across the bay in San Francisco at the time. The ship was docked in Alameda. Conner, a member of the engine crew and ship's delegate for the union, was aboard ship, but it was unquestionably established that he was nowhere near the cabin at the time of the murder. Further than this, there was no conceivable reason why they would want to kill Alberts. Shipowners and newspapers contended, however, that it was an act of union terrorism.

A fourth man, George Wallace, was convicted along with King, Ramsay, and Conner. He had a long standing grudge against the murdered man, was aboard the ship at the time, had no business being there, had a long and unsavory police record, and was involved in a stabbing once before. He got off with second degree murder charges after giving testimony attempting to implicate King, Ramsay, and Conner. To top it off, he had a deep-seated grudge against Earl King and the union.

Prior to the Angel Island hearing of the Harry Bridges deportation case, King, Ramsay, and Conner were approached in San Quentin with offers of influential aid in securing their release if they would swear Bridges was a Communist. They refused, and the facts were all revealed in sworn testimony at the hearing.

A personal letter from you, or an official letter from your organization, to Gov. Culbert L. Olsen, Sacramento, Calif., sincerely asking that King, Ramsay, and Conner be pardoned may well convince him that the public support for such an action is paramount. You may be sure that those who framed them are bringing pressure on the governor. If he has your support to weigh against such pressure, it may determine the issue.

Their freedom would give us a better score in what the tired radical called a "contest." As to the final victory in that "contest," we have no doubt. In the meantime, we can't forget our own.

San Francisco, Calif. Mike Quin.

"Oliver Wiswell"

To New Masses: The review of *Oliver Wiswell* in last week's *NM* confirmed my feeling that this is one of the most vicious and dangerous books in a long time. What bothers me, though, is the enormous popularity of this fascist-minded novel. How account for it? Here is a book that lashes out furiously against Sam Adams, John Hancock, and the masses of Americans who fought for independence and freedom in '76. It runs directly counter to everything that any good American thinks about our great democratic tradition. And yet, the book sells like hot cakes. I read the other day that in the first month of publication, *Oliver Wiswell* established a new all-time record for a one-month sale.

I have been thinking the problem over, and I'd like to suggest some explanations for this disturbing fact. Perhaps other readers can add further reasons.

1. Most reviewers gave a totally false impression of the book. They misled readers and potential buyers. For example, one reviewer said: *"Oliver Wiswell* stands out head and shoulders above any book of this month or year . . . the most *patriotic* novel Roberts has ever written." This quotation was widely used in the ads. Other reviews treated the novel as a great love story, a masterpiece of adventure, a "startlingly original" approach to American history, etc., etc.

2. The publishers of the novel invested a small fortune in advertising. For instance, in advance of publication booksellers were told in their trade journal, the *Retail Bookseller:* "Remember—$20,000.00 advertising between now and Christmas will presell *your customers.*" The publishers played up the fact that "ALL COPIES PACKAGED IN CELLOPHANE . . . have extra gift appeal"—a great literary tribute. But even these appeals apparently proved to be insubstantial at first, because the publishers announced that their pre-Christmas advertising appropriation would be increased to $26,000.

3. The press was properly appreciative of the $26,000 and spread the book over its review columns, and even in news stories. Not only were there front-page reviews in the New York *Times, Herald Tribune,* and *Saturday Review of Literature;* but *Time* magazine, with its 800,000 circulation, gave the book "more space (front cover, plus eight columns inside) than it has given any other book."

4. The inflated reputation of Kenneth Roberts helped, too. Movie versions of his novels, radio ballyhoo, photos in the picture magazines—all contributed. The same techniques are employed to push a book like this as the techniques used to sell a brand of soap or breakfast food.

All I can add is that in a privately conducted poll, I found six readers of the book who felt gypped and betrayed, none who really liked it.

Detroit, Mich. Selma Rankin.

Lockheed and Britain

To New Masses: Some weeks ago, the California press featured a story designed to scotch the unpatriotic rumor that the men behind the defense industries are in it for the money. Proudly the papers pointed to the Lockheed ($27,000,000 backlog of orders) plan to give, donate, contribute, absolutely for free, a bomber to the British. Lockheed officials proved further that capital and labor can collaborate on a purely sacrificial basis, for not only were they giving all the necessary materials to construct this bomber, but each employee was contributing two hours' time. At the Union Air Terminal Movietone News recorded this *beau geste* for history. There were the company executives giving, and there was the British Purchasing Commission taking, and finally there was Jimmy Mattern, round the world flyer, volunteering to fly the plane to Canada.

Before the film audiences could recover from this heart-burning example of hands across the air, another slightly less noble version of this saga was being told by the men in the plant. In the first place, the workers learned about the plan and their unanimous agreement with it from the newspapers and the radio. In the second place, it was entirely voluntary except that when they came to work they found a little green slip for each volunteer to sign, attached to their time cards. Those who tore up the slips found another the next day, *ad infinitum.* The cheery foremen also did a little coaxing. In the third place, the Lockheed Employees Recreation Club, the company union, stooged the idea along. In the fourth place, two weeks before the plan was announced the company had refurbished an old bomber which had been used for more than a year for experimental purposes, was obsolete, and therefore unsellable. This apparently was the plane which they handed over. Could it be, the men are asking, that the company had conceived the plan to get rid of a crate in return for the good will advertising which will produce more orders? Could it be that the company's altruistic contribution of materials will go into a new plane to be sold? To which echo replies—could be.

Los Angeles. O. R. Stitt.

Appreciation

To New Masses: I drop you a note to let you know that I thought your editorial article on "The Britain We Want to Aid" was one of the finest pieces of writing I've ever seen.

Keep up the good fight.

Brooklyn, N. Y. Herbert Aptheker.

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The Meaning of Henri Bergson

In this French philosopher's ideas, a dying class saw a reflection of its own image. His antagonism toward science. . . . Hacker's new book obscures American history.

THE death of Henri Bergson several days ago came at its appointed hour with the end of the Third French Republic. The bourgeois republic has taken with it to the grave its chief ideological spokesman. By some final irony, Bergson lived to see his own disciple, Jacques Chevalier, now Secretary of State for Education in the Vichy government, promulgate the principles upon which French fascist education is to be founded. Bergson himself did not wish to deduce the fascist consequences which were latent in his thought. That job of relentless demonstration was left to history.

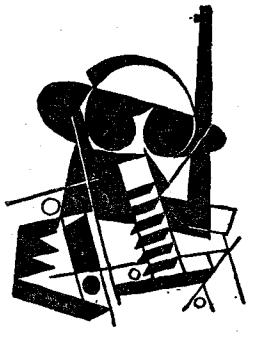
What was Bergson's role in French thought, and why did his ideas gain such renown? To answer this question, we must place Bergson against the background of French society in the years after 1871. When the French bourgeoisie crushed the Paris Commune, when it massacred the workers at Pere La Chaise, it gave up whatever loyalty to the French Revolution it had still retained. Thenceforth, the French bourgeoisie had no use for Voltairean materialism. It abandoned the vigorous faith in reason and scientific method which had been the rallying cry of the French revolutionary bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century. Science, materialism, intelligence were dangerous because they might be used by the working class to criticize and overthrow the bourgeois order. The bourgeoisie of the Third French Republic desired a philosophy which would provide some rationalization for its anti-scientific, anti-materialistic bias. Bergson gave the bourgeois republic its ideology. He was rewarded with a chair at the College de France.

In Bergson's ideas, the decaying class saw a reflection of its own image. Truth, said Bergson, could not be obtained by the scientist's observations in a laboratory, nor could it be given to the workman engaged in working with tools. Truth, on the contrary, was accessible only by means of an intuitive method, the monopolistic rights to which were reserved to the leisure class. Veblen once observed that every leisure class defines "reality" in such a way as to make it conform to its own "contaminated" mentality. Bergson defined "reality" with such exquisite delicacy that his lectures became the rendezvous of the fashionable ladies of Paris. The scientist, said Bergson, sees only the exterior of things; he does not see things from within, since his symbols always stand between him and the objects with which he deals. But, continued Bergson, there is a "higher" knowledge, metaphysics, which does not need symbols and which does see things from within. To obtain this "knowledge," you must stop thinking, you must stop analyzing, you must stop occupying yourself with material objects. You must withdraw from any practical contact with the external world, and turn inward upon yourself. You will then perceive the flow of your own pure personality, and with this "intuition," indeed, reality will have been revealed. The pursuits of the French leisure class, which Proust has described, were thus an ideal preparation for the discovery of metaphysical truths. Reality unspoiled belonged only to the idle.

The French bourgeoisie, like its English brethren, was concerned with taking the sting out of Darwin. Bergson's doctrine of creative evolution provided a dose of metaphysical nonsense serviceable to their interests. Bergson proposed the view that the evolutionary process was driven by an original impetus of life, the well known *elan vital*. From the scientific standpoint, this statement is as devoid of meaningful content as Bergson's other famous doctrine that thought needs a brain not for its existence but only in order to express itself. Fortunately, scientists were not impressed by Bergson; mathematical and experimental methods have been applied by men like J. B. S. Haldane to the biological problems which Bergson said were beyond scientific explication.

It would be a legitimate problem to discover the conditions under which the kind of introspective data that Bergson describes occurs. But these data have no more exclusive claim upon the word "reality" than the visions of a drunkard.

Bergson's system differed in one important respect from the metaphysics of the medieval schoolmen. Unlike their fixed, orderly world, Bergson's *elan vital* was uncertain in its aspirations, blundering in its ways. The uncertainties and instabilities of the bourgeois order are projected by Bergson into the eternal scheme of things. Change, he believed, could not be described by causal laws. According to Bergson, therefore, the Marxian method is basically unsound, because it tries to analyze the process of economic development. There was a time when men like Sorel, the exponent of syndicalism, sought to propagate such views among the working class. Some French workers, disheartened by the reformist policies and betrayals of Socialist leaders, sought consolation in a kind of "proletarian mysticism." The Bergsonian doctrine was primarily, however, an expression of the intellectual disintegration of the bourgeois class. Young French intellectuals who saw themselves condemned to lives of corrupt careerism tended to express their disillusionment with intelligence by adherence to Bergson's philosophy of the "self-hatred of the intellect."



Rodney

Bergson's writings during the first world war have been republished as Allied propaganda for the second world war. Bergson criticized German imperialism for its insatiable lust of conquest, but he was blind to the ways of Anglo-French imperialism. The method of intuition had its nationalist shortcomings. The Germans are the villains in Bergson's metaphysical drama, for they are plotting against the *elan vital*. Indeed, German hegemony would make Bergson's metaphysics false; and therefore, the Germans must be defeated. The war, said Bergson, is the outcome of Prussian mechanism, the Prussians, "a people with whom every process tended to take a mechanical form . . . the idea of Prussia always evoked a vision of rudeness, of rigidity, of automatism." . . . Germany, he declared, proposed the mechanization of the spirit whereas the Allies proposed the spiritualization of matter. The colonial peoples exploited by Anglo-French imperialism, the trade unionists imprisoned by Daladier and Petain, could comfort themselves with the thought that they were being "spiritualized."

Like a typical bourgeois philosopher, Bergson believed that the social laws of the bourgeois order were the universal laws of all social systems. Men, he asserted, have a war instinct, and war is natural. . . . "The origin of war is ownership, individual and collective, and since humanity is predestined to ownership by its structure, war is natural. So strong, indeed, is the war instinct. . . . Think now of the enthusiasm of a people at the outbreak of a war!" *(The Two Sources of Morality and Religion)*. Perhaps Bergson became doubtful on this point when he saw the "enthusiasm" with which the French people followed the Daladier government into the war.

Bergson's polemic against historical materialism reflected his aversion toward the working class. Social initiative, he said, has always come from the upper classes. "Thus it was the upper middle class, and not the working classes, who played the leading part

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in the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, aimed against the privilege of wealth. Later it was men of the educated classes who demanded education for all." *(The Two Sources)*. The upper middle class did, indeed, play a leading part in the Revolution of 1848, *the* leading part, that is, in the betrayal of the Revolution. Bergson evidently forgot the events of the June days of 1848—the suppression of the workers who rose to defend themselves against the reactionary bourgeoisie. And it is an illusion to entrust the cause of public education to the hands of the "educated classes." We have only to observe the restrictions which the French fascists have placed on the educational opportunities of the working class.

Bergson's method of "intuition" led to some curious results when it was applied to social problems. Europe, said Bergson, is overpopulated; therefore, there are wars. Or to quote his inimitable words: "Let Venus have her way, and she will bring you Mars." Bergson proposed that reproduction should be rationally regulated. Presumably the *elan vital* must be mechanized, after all, if it is to survive. In addition to repeating Malthus, Bergson spoke with a vaguely reactionist tinge concerning the need for a "central, organizing intelligence" which would "allot to the machine its proper place." He looked forward to some mystic genius who would transfigure the masses of men. Imperialism, he said, will then become mysticism. Thus culminates the transcendental nonsense.

Class interests forbade the French bourgeoisie's having a complete sympathy with science. Bergson's anti-intellectualism was essentially similar to the ideological products of the German irrationalists and the English metaphysicians. And it is noteworthy that neo-Bergsonian ideas have been brought into circulation by the ideological advocates of American participation in the imperialist war. Antagonism to science is a common property of the "thinkers" of the rival decaying capitalist states. Anti-intellectualism springs from no obscure source. If you don't like the consequences of scientific method, you simply say something is wrong with science, and you look for some alternative "method" of "real" knowledge. The Encyclopedists of the eighteenth century, the spokesmen of the young French bourgeoisie, were ardent teachers of science and joyous concerning the prospects of industrial civilization. Their heritage has been renounced by the decadent bourgoisie; it will be safeguarded by the working class.

LEWIS WIDENER.

Obscuring History

THE TRIUMPH OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM, *by Louis M. Hacker. Simon and Schuster. $3.*

LOUIS M. HACKER'S book contains much excellent factual material on the history of trade and manufacturing in America from colonial times until the 1870's. It is important to stress, however, that, in spite of its ambitious title, the book contains little else of value.

In some circles Hacker is regarded as a Marxist. This is by no means the case. Hacker belongs to the school of so-called "economic determinists," of which Charles H. Beard is perhaps the outstanding exponent in America; and between "economic determinism" and the Marxist materialist conception of history, there is the sharpest divergence. The major Marxist criticism of Hacker's book must necessarily be that it is too *narrowly* economic in that it fails to recognize the role of consciousness in history—the role of the idea, of organization, conscious struggle, and especially of politics.

By persistently underestimating the role of conscious political activity, Hacker creates the impression that political struggles have been ephemeral by-products of economic events and of no major consequence in themselves. Perhaps the crassest example of this is to be found in his discussion of the Kansas Civil War (p. 213). This conflict resulted from the effort of the slaveholders to vote slavery into Kansas by overrunning the territory with the infamous "border ruffians." To meet the slaveholder offensive, Abolitionist societies of the North, representing the middle-class farmers, artisans, rising industrialists, workers, and Negro people, organized the Emigrant Aid Society to assist the movement into Kansas of free-soilers as permanent homesteaders. Thus two streams of emigration from two different class origins poured into Kansas, and a bitter and bloody clash was inevitable. It goes without saying that real estate companies made fortunes by selling to both free-soilers and border ruffians. Yet Hacker gives the impression that, therefore, the eastern land speculators were pretty largely responsible for the whole affair —a vulgarization of the Marxist theory of the basic role of the modes of production in history. Unquestionably there was land speculation; but it was secondary. The basic explanation of the Kansas Civil War must be found in the conflict between two modes of production—chattel slavery and capitalism—arising from small scale commodity production. And this conflict took the form of a political class struggle.

Newton

The weakness of Hacker's interpretation is clearest in his scanty and superficial treatment of Jeffersonian democracy. After a fairly lengthy account of the Hamiltonian program, the victory of Jeffersonian democracy in 1800 is dismissed in two short paragraphs as an ineffectual agrarian movement which really came to terms with the capitalist interests without disarranging the Hamiltonian pattern "in any essential regard." This distortion of history follows the traditional Federalist interpretation. The conflict between Federalism and Jeffersonian democracy was never over *whether* or not capitalism was to develop, but over *how* it was to develop; whether it should rise rough-shod over the masses through an open political dictatorship as an instrument for rapid expropriation of the small owners even before the settlement of the vast Western lands, or whether it should develop on the basis of widespread democratic rights and ownership of land. In this conflict, the Federalists by no means had their way. Hacker does not even mention the vanguard role of Thomas Jefferson in leading the democratic mass movement, first to force a Bill of Rights into the Constitution and thereafter to support the Constitution, with all its shortcomings, as the only means of preserving American independence and those democratic victories already gained, against British and other foreign monarchical plots, as well as against internal Tory counter-revolution.

Hacker has nothing to say of the Bill of Rights whatsoever. Furthermore, he has nothing to say about the Federalist *political* program and the consequent Alien and Sedition Acts which, if left on the statute books, would have perpetuated a one-party dictatorship in America, making impossible any free election. The triumph of the Democrats certainly disarranged this Federalist pattern, as it did many others. In fact, if the Jeffersonians came to terms so easily with the moneyed interests, whence the long period of Federalist treasonable plots to dismember the Union, culminating in the Aaron Burr conspiracy and the Hartford Convention, of which there is not a word in Hacker's book? If Jeffersonian democracy was so ineffectual that it needs no discussion in a book on the triumph of American capitalism, how account for the fact that the Louisiana Purchase, which doubled the natural resources of the country and created the basis for doubling the home market, was carried out *by* the Jeffersonians over the *almost unanimous opposition of the Federalists?* How explain the fact that it was the Jeffersonians who defended our national borders against foreign foes and expanded our territory by removing military bases from the hands of those foes or preventing their falling into such hands by taking advantage of the rivalries of the great powers through (1) the Louisiana Purchase; (2) the War of 1812,

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during which the Federalists aided Britain; (3) the purchase of Florida; and (4) the Monroe Doctrine, in its time a purely defensive, collective security pact? Of these achievements Hacker says not a word. Finally, how can Hacker explain the fact that the *industrial* capitalists *supported* Jeffersonian democracy? To elaborate his own point concerning the conflict between the industrial and mercantile capitalists, Hacker should have examined the significance of the fact that Jefferson, over the opposition of the Federalists, encouraged the growth of native American industry and was far ahead of any Federalist of the time in the program for internal improvements.

Hacker's underestimation of the role of the conscious activity of the masses is furthermore seen in his ignoring of the Abolitionists, the long and painful work for a third party ending with the formation of the Republican Party. Especially must he be criticized for not emphasizing the heroic struggles of the Negro people before, during, and after the Civil War. While Hacker does not completely ignore the Negro people, nowhere does he challenge the false chauvinist theory that the Negro people were mere instruments in the hands of the Northern bourgeoisie. In fact, he virtually adheres to that theory by failing to elaborate the great positive achievements of the Negro people.

Nowhere is Hacker's superficiality shown so succinctly as in his generalization on page 405 that "The Civil War brought no lasting gains for the workers of the country." According to this view, it would have been just as well for the workers if open chattel slavery had remained in the South, if the Union had been dismembered and a Bonapartist empire perpetuated in Mexico! This is the same sort of pseudo-leftist propaganda as that advocated by certain disruptive elements in the trade unions during the Civil War, who maintained that the workers had no stake in the fight against chattel slavery unless it also became a fight against wage slavery! In view of such expressions as these, it seems by no means accidental that right at the outset of his history Hacker drags in by the hair a long and irrelevant quotation from Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution,* although he gives no account of the great role played by the *genuine* Marxists both in America and in Europe during the Civil War!

Quite glaring is the frivolous manner with which Hacker deals with the labor movement. In a book of 438 pages, only eight pages, apart from brief references here and there, are devoted to this important aspect of the rise of capitalism. Throughout his sketchy account, Hacker adheres to a narrow economist position. In discussing the "significant functional weaknesses" of the trade unions formed during the sixties and early seventies, Hacker points to the fact that "The spokesmen for labor constantly gravitated toward politics." Hacker does not blame the unions for failing to link their political with economic struggles, but for entering politics at all! Finally, in dis-

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GOINGS ON

A. B. MAGIL, editor, NEW MASSES, analyzes the week's events Sunday, January 19, 8:30 P.M. Workers School, 50 East 13 Street. 25 cents.

cussing the rise of the AFL, Hacker remarks, "With 1886, America's organized workers, under the leadership of skilled craft unionists, many of whom were permeated by socialist ideas and *with none of them beguiled by petty-bourgeois notions* [my italics—F. F.], began to move in the direction of effective economic action." In other words, the endeavor to win labor for independent political action is a petty-bourgeois notion!

Hacker centers his entire history around the conflict of the rising industrial capitalists with the older mercantile capitalists, who were both economically and politically allied with the slaveholder interests. This is an important point which has been insufficiently stressed by most American historians. Hacker clarifies many important aspects of this conflict and stresses correctly that the Civil War meant the triumph of industrial capitalism not only over the slave system but also over mercantilism. However, as has already been indicated, in dealing with Jeffersonian democracy he oversimplifies the conflict, failing to emphasize the fact that Jeffersonian democracy, in representing the middle-class interests generally, was not purely agrarian but also representative of the rising industrialists. He fails to illuminate the role of the Jeffersonian Embargo against Britain and the War of 1812 in stimulating the rise of industrial capitalism. He also fails to discuss the significance of the fact that under Madison the Second National Bank was founded, while under Monroe protective tariffs, as well as liberal land legislation, were adopted. In other words, Hacker gives a mechanical, undialectical account of the rise of industry, speaking too simply of mercantile and industrial capitalism as two separate and distinct stages of capitalism, without sufficiently showing the development of industry under the middle-class democratic regime prior to the final triumph of industrial capitalism during and after the Civil War.

In the concluding section of his book Hacker trots out the old discredited theory of Kautsky and Bukharin in maintaining that state capitalism, of which he regards the New Deal as an example, is based (of all things!) on the idea of welfare and social service and is heralding the emergence of an organized capitalism of abundance! How plans of crop reduction together with chronic unemployment are heralding abundance is not made clear. Certainly the present war gives little credence to any devotion to welfare on the part of capitalist states today.

Hacker's utter confusion or wilful obscurantism, whichever it may be, is also apparent in his analogy between the absolute monarchies of early modern history and present day "totalitarianism," in his assertion that what exists in Italy and Germany is the commencement of state socialism and his further assertion that the socialist economy of the Soviet Union is merely the completion of what has commenced already in Germany and Italy! All this is a crass falsification of the facts.

In concluding, it is necessary to remark

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that Hacker does not really finish his book. While he has amassed considerable material on the rise of industry prior to the 1870's, he does not with equal thoroughness describe the consolidation of capitalism following the Civil War. The closing passages skip over the period of the seventies and eighties in a sketchy and haphazard manner. Thus, the book lacks balance and even development. The general conclusion regarding Hacker's book must be that while it contains much valuable material of importance to students of American history, its interpretations are so bad and unscientific as to make it extremely dangerous.

FRANCIS FRANKLIN.

The Liberals

THE CITY OF MAN: A DECLARATION ON WORLD DEMOCRACY. *The Viking Press. $1.*

WHOEVER among them may actually have frothed out the frenzied text of this statement, it is declared to have been discussed, tinkered with, and approved, and is officially countersigned by Herbert Agar, Frank Aydelotte, G. A. Borgese, Van Wyck Brooks, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Christian Gauss, Alvin Johnson, Thomas Mann, Lewis Mumford, Reinhold Niebuhr, Gaetano Salvemini, and six other pro-war writers.

It lacks even the attraction of novelty. In whole or in part, it has already been elaborated, with equal bedlam, by Lewis Mumford and Waldo Frank and, with a better platform presence, by Archibald MacLeish. Indeed it is a surprise to find the Frank and MacLeish signatures missing. I assume Mr. Frank dissents over the ingredients of the new religion evangelized in this book, since it gives a place to a vaporized scientific spirit. As for Mr. MacLeish, perhaps he considers it best to keep his toga officially unsullied by any group contacts.

Immediate and everpresent in the book is panic. The panic includes among other elements a dread of social revolution. That dreadful stupidity or deceit which has led liberals to miscall and misunderstand the berserk imperialism of the fascists as world revolution, has provided them with new reasons for an old fear—the fear of drastic social change. Their fear has become hysteria. They are so sure that it is later than they think that they now embrace the war, which they abandoned Spanish democracy to avoid in their isolationist period; they are ready to accept imperialism under a fancy name ("pax-Americana"); and they are ready to accept fascist methods to acquire equal strength. They would strive for a fascist-modeled unity in America, deluding themselves that it will be used for noble, not ignoble ends. This is to be accomplished by the unifying fervor of a new universal religion and by the amputation of individual liberties.

Thus the astonishing thing is that if one ignores the rhetoric and considers only the proposals, one discovers this book to be chiefly an "Imitation of Hitler." Though it uses loving valedictory language instead of the Hitler hoot, it nevertheless bids farewell to democracy with a vaguely hopeful "See you again sometime." Like so many other scared and foolish liberals the signers appear to regard Hitler and Mussolini as successes. Under the lather of harsh words one discerns admiration for this success and a readiness to imitate it. The rationalization is the orthodox one—fighting the enemy with his own weapons. What will result when our democratic rights have been suctioned out of us and the new religion pumped in, is the City of Man, the vaguest Utopia yet on record, one constructed entirely of adjectives. In the meanwhile, in expectation of that adjectival good life we are told to sacrifice our liberties; we are to take in devout faith a new, good American imperialism; and we are to seek strength in the hypnosis of the new religion.

In this little book of about a hundred small pages in large print (though drearily long in the reading) I found these many passages to underline and note in my cursory first glance through:

"War, declared or undeclared, actual or virtual, has chosen us," is their formula for the acceptance of the war drive.

Property takes on a glow of sanctity. Describing what they hold to be justified constrictions of liberty in the past, they write: "The pillars of family and property were held unshakable and holy."

Of the new religion required (with the incidental aid of war) to erect "The City of Man" they say: "This common creed already exists. . . . It teaches that a divine intention governs the universe be it called God or law or Deity or The Holy Ghost or the Absolute or Logos or even Evolution." Thus even the scientific spirit is to be coordinated into the new religion.

They seek to lull people into surrenders of democratic rights by assurances that "the pruning of this tree of freedom will not make it less fruitful," and that a "reformation of the Reformation is needed and a discipline of liberty."

Through their rhetorical guards the ominous phrase "aristocracy and leadership" nevertheless slips in, and we are advised that our present sad state is due to the "moral deterioration . . . in both the categories of employers and employees."

Real social change is disclaimed: "No spirit of revolution animates our proposals, for revolution is 'an obsessive myth of the modern mind in its decay.'"

And finally we read, "We, the signers of this statement, have here declared the faith that unites us and the hopes which we share. This faith and hope need not be discouraged by the smallness of our numbers and the limitations of our power. For we remember that the destructive upheaval which is now shaking the earth started from humbler origins in conventicles of lost souls in Milan and in Munich some twenty years ago."

Here we have the imitation surging into the consciousness, the conventicles of found souls shuddering in unison, seventeen demoralized intellectuals, united in hysteria, stammering out frenzies to imitate the frenzies voiced in Munich and Milan.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Brief Reviews

HEART-SHAPE IN THE DUST, *by Robert E. Hayden. Falcon Press, Detroit. $1.50.*

This is a first book of verse by Robert E. Hayden, a young Negro poet from Michigan. Simple and clear in expression, his lyrics are a protest against the mistreatment of his people. Boast and shout as you will, says "The Negro to America," flaunt the star-spangled banner in the world's face,

> But, oh, my country,
> You are not free
> So long as there's
> A mortgage on
> My liberty. . . .

Among the most successful poems in the volume are those dealing with Negro heroes: "Gabriel" (who was hanged for leading a famous slave revolt) and "Coleman" (the Negro veteran who was brutally murdered by the Black Legion a few years ago). In "Speech," the poet suggests the unity of Negro and white workers; he reminds his brothers that the hand which gives the high sign to fire on white pickets is the same hand that holds the blowtorch to the dark, anguish-twisted body.

A number of poems offer biting commentaries on the present war. Fair Corinna goes a-maying and finds instead of posies in the grass, a stark death's head. The mass chant, "These Are My People," is a rousing finale to the volume.

This is an affirmative book of verse, charged with a sense of proud identification with a great people, aglow with the promise of a different future. Most of the purely subjective lyrics are less successful than those which deal directly with social themes. Insufficient use is made of folk materials. The texture of several poems suffers from an over-conventional use of diction and rhythm. But the work as a whole is a very moving and skillful performance by a young writer whose development it will be interesting to follow.

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AMERICA IN CONTEMPORARY FICTION, *by Percy Holmes Boynton. University of Chicago Press. $2.50.*

Mr. Boynton's America is composed of Old South, the dry bones of New England Puritanism, a couple of old stalwarts from the Middle West, a few lady novelists. Mr. Boynton doesn't like it; but anything is better than admitting the existence of the working man. So he chooses to regard American city life through the somewhat astigmatic eyes of Dos Passos and takes two chapters to pat Hergesheimer and Cabell affectionately on the head. Dreiser is summed up as "the Caliban of contemporary fiction," a phrase the author likes well enough to repeat wherever possible, and Dreiser's indignation over the injustices of capitalism is contemptuously dismissed as "hysterical." Proletarian and Negro writers get nothing at all. Mr. Boynton's choice of a representative Southern novelist is Stark Young, who wrote *So Red the Rose.* It's a wonder he overlooked *Gone With the Wind.*

The book wallows among trivialities, evading the vital issues of modern writing and the modern world, and contenting itself with lukewarm esthetic pronouncements couched in a pompous style. Mr. Boynton's definition of "contemporary fiction" needs bringing up to date.

A HISTORY OF THE THEATER, *by George Freedley and John A. Reeves. Crown. $3.*

The editors of this enormous volume have compiled an extremely valuable reference work of names, dates, and places, plus hundreds of interesting illustrations, about the theater. That it is no more than a source book they are certain to agree; for a detailed and comprehensive history of the theater, in terms of social history and human trends, could not be compressed into one volume of any size.

MY NAME IS ARAM, *by William Saroyan. Harcourt, Brace & Co. $2.50.*

The ineffable Saroyan continues to document his unimportant intimations of mortality. This time, in a collection of short pieces that are as amorphous as they are pointless, he has got around to his childhood, and given us an insight into the making of a white-haired boy. The boy is called Aram Garoghlanian, though he might have been called William Saroyan. It doesn't matter very much, for the author is just writing to hear himself talk.

THE TRAITOR CLASS, *by Ivor Montagu. Lawrence & Wishart, London, England. 2 shillings net.*

In this book of less than 50,000 words, Ivor Montagu, one of Britain's outstanding Marxist analysts, proves incontrovertibly, with evidence quoted from the most conservative press organs of the British ruling class, that the fall of France was a deliberate scheme and policy of France's rulers; that not merely France, but Czechoslovakia, Spain, Norway, Holland, and Belgium all fell, not before the attack merely of the Nazi forces, but also because of the internal treachery, treason, and deliberate policies of their own ruling classes. The book sounds a clarion warning to all peoples in capitalist countries to raise their protest against their real enemy at home. It is heartening that the book is having a wide sale in England, the first edition of 20,000 having been sold out shortly after publication. It would be a good idea for an American publisher to issue it in this country.

BRITAIN SPEAKS, *by J. B. Priestley. Harper & Bros. $2.50.*

J. B. Priestley is a garrulous fellow who turns out a torrent of language for the British Broadcasting Company each week. His publishers have tried to catch some of this language in a sieve, which is this book. You turn the dial on in the last days of the campaign in France, and it goes on until mid-September. The main idea, which is repeated with a retching fervor toward the close of each broadcast, is simple: the British empire was just a peaceful village trying to keep the lawns clipped and the statues tolerably free from bird-dung until a bunch of German gangsters muscled in on it. These gangsters must now be run out of town so that the villagers can continue their efforts at civic improvement. Unfortunately that cannot be done unless similar villagers from far-off America pitch in, which is what Priestley urges in a "it-will-do-you-more-good-than-it does-us" manner. There is not a fundamental idea in these pages as to why France fell, why the war came, what the war means, and what honest people ought to do about it. Supreme vanity is summed up in the title.

THIRD COPYRIGHT SYMPOSIUM *sponsored by the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers,* New York.

During the past half century, Congress and the courts have established procedure, defined rights, and fixed penalties for the violators of copyright law. The statutes and their interpretations have been complicated by the development of the radio, the talking picture, and mechanical reproductions of the spoken word and musical compositions. In this compact and definitive volume seven students of law have analyzed copyright legislation and decisions. The essays have been chosen in a nationwide competition in which forty law schools submitted papers. Final choice has been made by Dr. John H. Wigmore, dean of the faculty of Northwestern University School of Law. In view of the current music war between ASCAP and the radio chains, this book is of special importance to those who would understand the legal complications which underlie this extensive controversy. It is a comprehensive and interestingly written volume.

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Sacred Formula of the Cinema

An ancient device is revived by Hollywood's executives on behalf of the British empire. Sir Cedric Hardwicke at $1,500 a week . . . Marc Blitzstein's music.

Hollywood.

ACCORDING to sacred Hollywood formula, there's one unfailing device for pulling out of an impasse in a screen story. You simply cut to the flag. Your hero is pursued by Indians, or reasonable facsimile. He is cornered; he is caught; he is hopelessly lost. Cut to the flag—and the next thing the audience knows, the hero is dashing across the prairie on a cavalry horse, Jean Arthur in his arms, the dazzling sunset in his eyes, and his mouth full of deer jerkie.

Many people have considered this device as a serious abuse of the flag, but today it has been lifted from the comparative obscurity of a cinema trick to the position of a slogan for the entire industry. From Culver City to Burbank, the boys on top are frantically cutting to the flag, proudly conscious of their roles as leaders in one of the key national war industries. The administration program has to be sold to the people, and the medium of the screen is going to be one of the most persuasive forces doing the job.

The program requires, of course, that the boys abandon the traditional formula and cut to *two* flags, throwing in the Union Jack along with Old Glory. They seem willing, even eager, to do this. Louis B. Mayer, in addressing his employees on the Community Chest campaign, didn't put on the heat as in previous years. He understood, he said, why they weren't breaking their necks to contribute, but they should do something. And then when this drive is over, he concluded, you can all give to that cause which you *must* really be anxious to support — Mr. Churchill's war relief.

THE BROTHERS WARNER

In Hollywood's progressive circles, you can find varied reasons offered for this pro-British attitude of the producers and executives. In the first place some of them are anti-Nazi, and have been scared witless by visions of Hitler over Vine Street. These make the common mistake of assuming that Churchill is fighting an anti-Nazi war. And the John Bull contingent in Hollywood is working overtime to capitalize on this belief. They have just succeeded, for instance, in getting RKO to sign Sir Cedric Hardwicke at $1,500 a week for a 52-week period to produce a Bundles-for-Britain picture. Hitchcock's propagandizing in *Foreign Correspondent* illustrates another method, and the editorial policies of the newsreels constitute still another approach.

A second interpretation of the producers' pro-British leanings bases itself on a rumored deal between the movie monopoly and the government. Not so long ago Washington made loud noises in the direction of ending unfair block-booking practices. Considering themselves seriously threatened, the studios girded their legal loins for a fight. And then suddenly there wasn't so much as an echo from Washington. If a bargain was struck, it would account for a good deal of the producers' "stout fella" attitude.

And finally, a third reason is the influence that the President has on a certain group of producers. Among these, Harry Warner is the most outstanding. He has been looking through Roosevelt-colored glasses for long enough to give him a special niche in the President's affections; and he now defends the entire Roosevelt policy as if it were his own. Joseph Kennedy was on the Warner lot not so long ago advancing his appeasement program by telling an assemblage of producers and executives that England was a lost cause, that the United States ought to stick to its own business. After the meeting, Harry Warner explained the former ambassador's strange stand to his puzzled executives. "Mr. Kennedy was in London during the bombings," the charitable Warner said, "and he got shell-shocked."

THE GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY

The companion features of Aid-to-Britain and penetration of Latin America also have their Hollywood manifestations. In point of fact, if the Good Neighbor policy didn't exist Hollywood would have to invent it. With the European and Oriental markets badly bruised, the problem of release outlets is no insignificant one; and it's only logical that the Americas be given a good going over. It's getting so now that the wags around Hollywood and Vine claim that the Hays office will refuse to okay any script which doesn't mention Argentina at least six times.

With regard to war industry, the boys are determined that there won't be any bottlenecks in Hollywood. Agents are telling their writers that the market is wide open for stories treating some phase of the armament or conscription program — i.e., Boy Meets Gun, etc. If any difficulties arise, the army and navy are only too happy to step in and help out. Warners' is making a picture called *Wings of Steel,* and for an authentic finale the War Department is going to maneuver the US air forces. So the studios get a big production finale for nothing, the War Department gets a chance to rehearse along with plenty of advertising, and you get the same swift pain readily available any time in any newsreel.

Rodney

SCREEN WRITERS GUILD

The studio executives, their roots firmly planted in Wall Street, aren't slow to recognize that the "defense" business is a coin with two sides, and they're no slower to make use of the anti-labor side. The current example is their dealing with the Screen Writers Guild which two months ago won its first contract with the producers, for an 80 percent closed shop. The magnitude of this achievement is revealed by testimony at the NLRB hearing such as a producer calling a meeting of writers to say, "I have no intention of violating the Wagner act by intimidating anyone, but any guy in this studio who joins the Screen Writers Guild will never work in Hollywood again." Although the contract is to last until April 10, the producers are already acting in a manner which is both illegal and in violation of its spirit; and their arrogance is clearly predicated on the administration's determination that labor will have to be held in check during the emergency.

From all of this it isn't hard to deduce what sort of pictures will be coming out of Hollywood in 1941. A sizable proportion will beat the drums for the British empire, and for the American empire in the making; some will be designed for impure entertainment alone; and there will be very few exceptions, few honest pictures. *Citizen Kane,* the Orson Welles job, is one of these. It treats of the rise and degeneration of a publisher unmistakably patterned after Hearst, and will strike a new note as biography without benefit of Tyrone Power. Welles has a commitment for two more, and is already hard at work on the first, which will deal with a *real* Mexican story and use *real* Mexican characters, breaking with the producer's Cisco Kid tradition. Another piece which looks as though it might have something is *The Sea Wolf,* adapted by Bob Rossen from the Jack London book, and which, if successful, may lead to the filming of other London works.

While the prospect doesn't seem too inspiring, there are certain hopeful signs. Reaction by audiences to *Foreign Correspondent*

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was, to say the least, tepid, while *Grapes of Wrath,* which they're re-issuing now, was one of the year's three biggest money makers. The comparison is symptomatic; the audience which wants *Grapes of Wrath,* is not going to swallow jingopap without gagging. Also, the phony attitude with which Hollywood approaches South America is actively resented by the nations to the South. The Argentine ban on *Down Argentine Way* is a case in point. Importing gaucho technical advisers is not going to help. It's not only Americans who know what they want, then, and if any further proof is needed, note this from the *Hollywood Reporter: "The Great Dictator* broke all records in Mexican screen history on its opening day at the Chino Theater, its first day's take equalling the *week's* gross of eight out of ten pictures shown in Mexico City."

The lessons for Hollywood are obvious; and if the producers can't learn, it will be up to the people—not only of this country, but of the South American nations and the world—to teach them. And the first thing to be taught will be that the unfailing device for pulling out of an impasse is to cut to the people.

HOWARD P. RYAN.

COMPOSITION WITH TWO PARROTS *is a new mural by Fernand Leger, one of the most important of French modern painters. The work, 13 feet high, 15 feet 8 inches wide, and typical of his semi-abstract painting, is on exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. It was painted during the years 1935-39. The artist is now in New York.*

Blitzstein's Music

A summing up of the tunes in "No for an Answer."

MARC BLITZSTEIN'S *No for an Answer* is an opera only in the sense that the dramatic action and music form a continuous thread, supplementing, and reacting on each other. The structure could not exist without the music. On the other hand, the music does not interfere with the development of the play, as is too often the case in conventional opera. The motion of the story flows from the music but never permits the music to place artificial barriers in its path. Wherever necessary the music is withdrawn. Further, none of the characters sings in accepted operatic style. The cast is basically acting to music. The countless transitions from music to colloquial speech and back again serve the purpose of keeping the entire action moving. In this sense it can be considered a play in music. Actually, what Mr. Blitzstein has evolved is neither an opera nor a play, but a new style containing the elements of both forms. He has combined these into an exciting hybrid which will most certainly some day be formally baptized and named.

Some of these elements have been used before. The "number" form employed in *No for an Answer* can be traced back to the operas of Mozart and Weber and is found in the modern operettas of Kurt Weill and Hans Eisler. This form as used by these composers called for a straight dramatic text followed by a musical number, either an aria or a group number. The alternation was generally obvious and stilted. Blitzstein has taken over this technique and by utilizing it in a completely individual manner has developed it to an infinitely higher stage. In both *The Cradle Will Rock* and *No for an Answer* there are no lines of demarcation between dialogue, musical numbers, solos, etc. Each of these elements is injected, dropped, reintroduced in a fluid interplay. When Gina in *No for an Answer* pathetically scolds Mery for having a baby you are hardly conscious of the transition from music to speech. You may not notice the music as a separate entity because you are too occupied with what Gina is saying. But the impact and power that the weaving music injects into the spoken lines leave the listener limp. Another example of Blitzstein's musical talent is the love scene between Joe and Francie. Here ordinary dialogue spoken by Francie is alternated with a repeated musical-phrase, "Francie, Ah, Ah, Ah," sung by Joe. This phrase sung over and over again with significant inflections contains a remarkably poignant expression of love.

The music in *Cradle* fitted like the proverbial glove. *No for an Answer* involving a much more complex structure, more intricate human relationships, and characterizations requires a corresponding music. Consequently the choral writing is vastly expanded over *Cradle,* the groupings are more variegated and the relation of these groups to individuals is more subtle. There is, however, the same generous borrowing of typical American musical materials. Jazz, blues, vaudeville sequences, and barber shop harmonies find their way into a superb take-off on a torch singer, a mock sentimental "ballad" of penny candy and a three-way satire on hamburgers, capitalism, and a lost shoe. There is also the hauntingly beautiful melody line that comes in the quieter, more reflective sections. "In the Still, Still Night" is one of the finest fox-trot melodies I have ever encountered and Clara's song, "In the Clear," shows that Blitzstein has lost none of his expressive powers as a melodist.

A further strong point in favor of the versatile Mr. Blitzstein is his ability to place his advanced harmonies, difficult rhythms, and unconventional melodic line into a mold simple enough for the broadest audiences to grasp. This is a tremendous achievement, and something all serious composers would do well to emulate.

Aside from academic and technical considerations, much of the source of Blitzstein's musical power is derived from the characters and subjects he deals with. Certainly his genuine and contagious affection for Chuck, Nick, Joe, and all the members of the Diogenes Club plays an important role in influencing the direction and nature of his music. The comradeship in "The Purest Kind of a Guy," the gayety of "Workers, Do Your Homework," the ominous power of "Did They Think They Could Get Away With That?" or the dignity and sweep of the final chorus can only be the product of an artist whose eloquence and strength stem from the people.

If some of our music critics are worried

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about whether this country will ever produce a composer of major proportions, let them stop worrying, for right in their midst is the brilliant and immensely endowed Marc Blitzstein.

LEAGUE OF COMPOSERS CONCERT

You rarely hear anyone mention, *"Les Six"* any more. But about 1922 the entire music world was agog about a group of six French composers who sardonically violated every accepted precept of music. These *enfants terribles* labored under the motto "Shock the bourgeoisie," and in the main succeeded. Their attitude derived from the atmosphere of post-war disillusionment in which cynicism and novelty flourished. This group regarded "great ideals" with deep disdain and claimed only ordinary things were worth while. Their definition of ordinary was very flexible and could extend to writing about bar rooms or vacuum cleaners. To these composers the grandiloquent music of the romanticists and the abstractions of the Debussy impressionists were identified with the smug middle-class audience whom they disliked intensely. The spearhead of this group, Darius Milhaud, wrote such items as "An Oxen on the Roof," and a song cycle which utilized a mail order catalogue for its subject matter. Nevertheless, his music possessed a certain rude, rugged strength, both appealing and skillful. *"La Creation Du Monde"; "Soldades de Brazil"* (written after a visit to Brazil); *"Poemes Juifs,"* and the opera "Christophe Colomb" were compositions that succeeded in establishing Milhaud as a prominent musical figure. During the Popular Front period, he associated himself with progressive trends. He wrote music for important films and composed a piece called "Death of a Tyrant."

It was therefore with great eagerness that many of us looked forward to the concert sponsored by the League of Composers at the Museum of Modern Art where an entire evening was devoted to the more recent of Milhaud compositions. Eagerness was soon transformed into keen disappointment when it became clear as the evening unfolded that Milhaud was slipping backward. Here was music that was hardly shocking, but on the contrary was mild and repetitious. I doubt whether it would offend even the most conservative listener. *"Le Voyage D'Ete"* (1940) was a song cycle written to an insipid text. Floating, vague, and dull, it sounded like a lifeless shadow of Debussy. Just as flat was *"La Cantate de l'enfant et de la Mere"* (1938), which employed the services of a *diseuse,* a string quartet, and a piano. Again the text covered such a trivial subject that it would have been ridiculous to attach music of any import to it. And none ever came! The bulk of the evening's music was of a similar caliber except for two vigorous excerpts from "Christophe Colomb" and some fine piano pieces played by the composer at the tail end of the program.

Milhaud is unquestionably a gifted composer. As a reaction from the days when he

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sowed his wild oats, he seems to be drifting towards some form of neo-impressionism. This is dangerous because creative artists who refuse to go forward find themselves riding in reverse. Stravinsky, the outstanding composer of the early part of the century, hit the backward route via neo-classicism. As a composer he is today virtually sterile. Milhaud must recognize that his most accepted works were concerned with subjects that said something. He can never hope to progress if he fusses with trivialities in order not to offend the very audience he once took such delight in shocking. There is a vast audience capable of enjoying a music that deals with the vital currents of contemporary events and people. If Milhaud continues working along the lines he seems to be following at present, he will soon sink into oblivion. For the composer of *"Soldades de Brazil"* that would be a tragedy.

LOU COOPER.

"Arsenic and Old Lace"

A review of Joseph Kesselring's new mystery play.

IF YOU can buy a ticket, go to the Fulton Theater and see *Arsenic and Old Lace,* the indescribable mystery play by Joseph Kesselring, which has been announced hereabouts for at least a year, and has finally arrived. Nothing like it has been seen before on land, sea, or in the air, let alone on the stage. You should know that from the title—which is perfect.

On the off-chance that you haven't read the daily reviews, I am not going to tell you the plot. Those daily reviewers who did tell the plot did you and the playwright and the actors a distinct disservice. For the fun involved in this one is so dependent upon the element of surprise inherent in the script, that to tell the plot is to spoil much of the fun. Suffice it to say that it has to deal with multiple murder done in an old Brooklyn mansion, and that, if you can imagine murder being funny, it is the funniest play you will see this year, bar none.

The ingenuity of the playwright, which is considerable, has been (if possible) topped by the production—a beautiful ensemble directed by Bretaigne Windust in a Raymond Sovey set, and performed by a galaxy of superior performers. It would be difficult to single out any single actor for special praise, for the performances of Josephine Hull, John Alexander, Jean Adair, Anthony Ross, Helen Brooks, Allyn Joslyn, Edgar Stehli, and the original Boris Karloff form a collectivity that does not permit of ready analysis.

Without saying any more, I insist that this is a rave review of an excruciatingly funny mystery melodrama (thoroughly superficial to be sure) that should put you in stitches at regular three-minute intervals, and leave you limp at the final curtain. In these days, no small boon.

ALVAH BESSIE.

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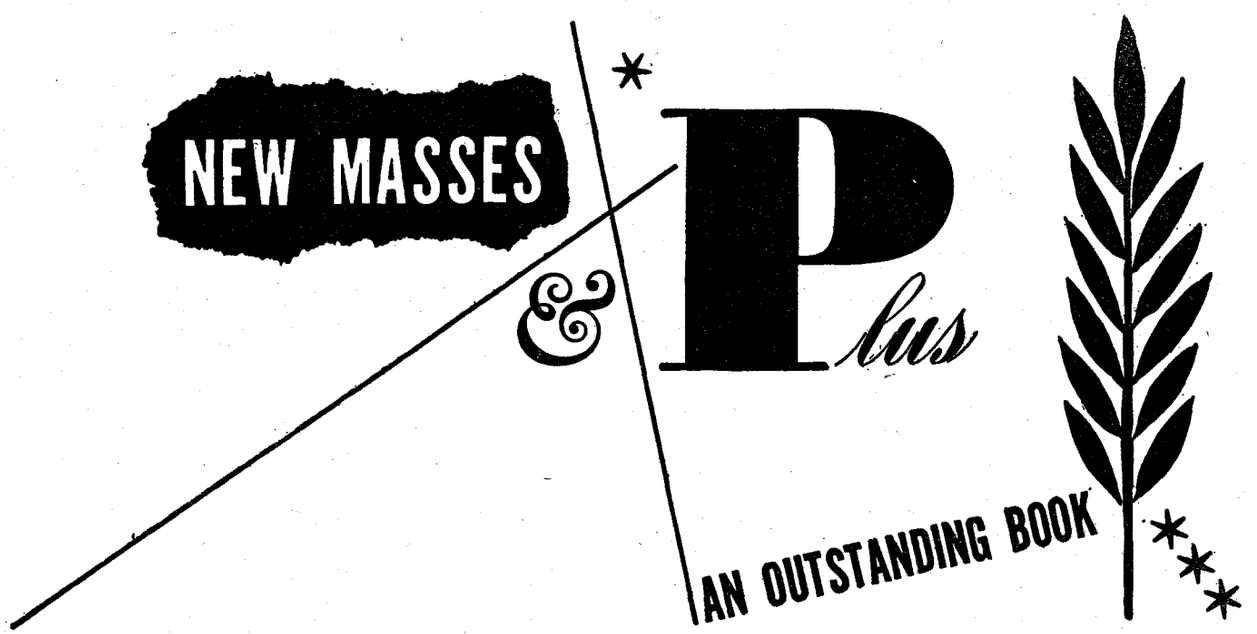

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